Daily Report

Latin America

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Cuba

FAR Denies Report on Casualties in Angola

FL281748 Havana Radio Reloj Network in Spanish 1508 GMT 28 Jan 88

[Text] Western news media, including the anti-Cuban radio station financed and controlled by the U.S. Government, have again claimed in the last few days the alleged occupation of Cuito Cuanavale in Angola's Cuando Cubango Province by UNITA [National Union for the Total Independence of Angola] bandits and South African racists.

The FAR Ministry reports that, as the Angolan authorities have announced already, those allegations are totally false and the positions of the People's Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola, FAPLA, in the aforementioned place remain firm after they counterattacked failed attempts of joint UNITA and South African racist forces to occupy Cuito Cuanavale. The same Western sources have carried reports of alleged casualties inflicted on Cuban military personnel in such actions. According to the FAR Ministry's note, those reports are also totally false.

Rights Committee Suspends News Conference

PA281955 Madrid EFE in Spanish 0730 GMT 28 Jan 88

[Text] Havana, 27 Jan (EFE)—The Cuban Human Rights Committee today suspended a news conference it had scheduled to report on Cuba's human rights situation. Committee Chairman Ricardo Bofill said state security officials warned that holding the news conference was illegal.

The committee called the news conference to issue a report on the upcoming UN Human Rights Commission meeting in Geneva and to present the testimony of 12 people who "attest to our statement on human rights violations in Cuba."

EFE contacted an authorized Cuban Foreign Ministry spokesman about the suspension of the news conference, to which representatives from the U.S. Interests Section, and the UK, FRG, and Spanish ambassadors had been invited.

"There has been no suspension. These people's actions are not important; we do not follow their activities. They just want to make noise," the spokesman said.

After the cancellation, organizers of the news conference invited guests to visit Bofill at his home in Guanabacoa, close to Havana.

Bofill said he and two other committee members were summoned to the central security office in Villa Marista State and were told they could not hold the news conference because it was illegal and harmful to the revolution's interests.

A spokesman for the committee (which Bofill says comprises over 100 persons) said the committee's report has been or is yet to be sent to the European and Latin American governments which will attend the Geneva meeting so an investigation can be conducted. The report is titled: "Cuba 1987: The Human Rights Situation."

The report contains serious accusations against the administration of justice and the prison system.

"We are not asking that Cuba be condemned at any international forum; we want to find solutions to the problems affecting human rights," Bofill stated.

Foreign Minister Visits Argentina, Mexico

Meets With Caputo

FL290033 Havana Radio Reloj Network in Spanish 2008 GMT 28 Jan 88

[Text] Cuban and Argentine Foreign Ministers Isidoro Malmierca and Dante Caputo, respectively, today in Argentina assessed the progress of bilateral relations as well as the fundamental aspects of the international situation.

The talks are part of the agenda for Malmierca's official visit. Malmierca will be in Argentina until Saturday and President Raul Alfonsin will receive him tomorrow.

The two foreign ministers paid special attention during their first work sessions to the delicate Central American situation shortly before a U.S. congressional decision is made to continue aid to the Contras.

Argentine press agencies today stressed that Malmierca and Argentine authorities will discuss Washington's attempt to force an anti-Cuban motion at the UN Human Rights Commission meeting that began in Geneva.

Accuses U.S. of Meddling

FL281228 Havana Tele-Rebelde Network in Spanish 1200 GMT 28 Jan 88

[Text] Cuban Foreign Minister Isidoro Malmierca has accused the United States of meddling in Cuban domestic affairs with its position at the UN Human Rights Commission. The Cuban foreign minister arrived in Argentina on a 3-day official visit in response to an invitation made by his colleague Dante Caputo, who welcomed him at the airport accompanied by Santiago Diaz Paz, Cuban ambassador to Argentina; and Luis Claraso de la Vega, Argentine ambassador to Cuba.

Meets With Alfonsin

FL292148 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 1800 GMT 29 Jan 88

[Special report from Buenos Aires Radio Belgrano for Radio Rebelde]

[Text] Argentine Foreign Minister Dante Caputo has reported that Argentine President Raul Alfonsin and Cuban Foreign Minister Isidoro Malmierca this morning examined Latin America's economic situation, relations between countries of the continent, and the consolidation of democracy in the region.

After participating in the meeting held between the chief of state and the Caribbean diplomat at the Olivos presidential residence today, Caputo said President Alfonsin referred to the strengthening of democracy in Argentina and South America. He also dealt specifically with the domestic situation. Caputo added that Alfonsin and Malmierca discussed the Central American issue, the recent regional presidents' meeting, and Argentina's permanent commitment with the Contadora Group aimed at reaching peace in that area. Finally, he noted that the president and his Cuban colleague analysed the progress of bilateral relations, which Alfonsin characterized as excellent.

As you know, the Cuban foreign minister arrived here Wednesday evening for a 2-day visit. He also plans to discuss with Argentine authorities Buenos Aires' position at the Geneva UN Human Rights Commission meeting scheduled for next Monday. Several sectors of the Argentine political right-wing are pressuring our country to change its vote at the upcoming UN Human Rights Commission meeting. At the moment, and according to Foreign Ministry sources, that change is not foreseen. Therefore, Cuba's concerns over the possibility of the United States insisting on investigating the supposed human rights violations in that Caribbean country are not viable at the moment.

Arrives in Mexico City

PA312204 Havana International Service in Spanish 1600 GMT 31 Jan 88

[Text] Cuban Foreign Minister Isidoro Malmierca arrived in Mexico and said Latin American countries agree on the need for an overall solution to the grave foreign debt problem.

During an impromptu news conference at Mexico City's airport, Malmierca accused the United States of being the main instigator of Central American violence and praised the Contadora and Support Groups for seeking to prevent the spread of conflicts in the region.

In another part of his statements, the Cuban foreign minister described Cuban-Mexican relations as excellent, noting that the fifth meeting of the mixed general intergovernmental commission, to begin Monday, will assess the achievements and possibilities of increasing bilateral trade.

Mexico is the last leg of Malmierca's Latin American tour, which included Panama, Uruguay, Brazil, and Argentina.

U.S. Role in Haitian Elections Assessed

PA262254 Havana International Service in Spanish 2300 GMT 22 Jan 88

["Our America" commentary—read by Manolo Ortega]

[Text] Civil disobedience is the fundamental characteristic of the situation in Haiti following the 17 January electoral farce. Abstention, which exceeded 90 percent, is something that should be taken into account by those who want to assess the situation in a country which recently emerged from the prolonged dictatorship of the Duvaliers and whose population is obviously against having its political destiny imposed on it.

Although the 17 January elections were unusually calm compared with the 29 November elections, they did not manage to convince local public opinion, which not only demonstrated its lack of confidence in the alleged assurances of the Henri Namphy regime, but also rejected a formula obviously concocted with the U.S. Government. Although some U.S. legislators may be offended to hear it, the White House and State Department have much to do with the political evolution in Haiti. And plans are underway, including the possibility of a direct invasion of the sister Caribbean republic by U.S. troops.

The more than 30 U.S. and NATO countries' warships near the Haitian coast are not so much a warning to the ultrarightist groups as they are a measure of open blackmail to those Haitian sectors which want a real change of government and genuine establishment of democracy.

Remember that for Washington the Duvalier dictatorship was an acceptable instrument until popular pressures threatened U.S. domination of the country and forced Baby Doc to leave aboard a U.S. Air Force aircraft for his comfortable exile.

With the installation of the Henri Namphy regime, the United States managed to enter those economic sectors controlled by Duvalierist officials. The somewhat developed rice, poultry, and oil sectors have been virtually destroyed as a result of the almost forced importation of low quality U.S. surplus foodstuffs.

In the field of so-called military cooperation, the Pentagon redoubled its military aid to the new government and plans to increase the number of Army troops to 25,000. One could ask why there is an insistence on

increasing the number of troops in a nation where the most pressing need is to repair the socioeconomic chaos of a nation considered to be one of the most impoverished in the world. The results of the 17 January elections are eloquent. Some sources say that barely 2 per cent of the eligible voters went to the polls. In fact, Western observers said they saw the same person vote more than once under instruction of military officials. At some polls, when only two persons voted, there were some candidates with a total of 9 votes, something that is truly preposterous and shows the magnitude of the farce orchestrated by Henri Namphy. The dishonesty was such that the U.S. Government had to publicly, if mildly, criticize the elections.

Popular discontent in Haiti, which has been present during the past months, is an important factor to be considered for the future political evolution in Haiti. It is a powder keg waiting to be lit and explode at any moment. Hence, there is a need to draw attention to the increasing U.S. military presence around that Caribbean republic, which is only intended to intervene in case of a popular outbreak in order to maintain imperialist domination at all costs. When the White House reluctantly criticized the 17 January farce, it was actually taking a new step in preparing the ground work for a possible military action under the worn-out guise of defending democracy and stability in a country where the masses have a strong anti-interventionist feeling.

Malmierca on Possible Olympics Participation

PA010125 Paris AFP in Spanish 0004 GMT 1 Feb 88

[Excerpts] Mexico City, 31 Jan (AFP)—Cuban Foreign Minister Isidoro Malmierca said here today that Cuba will maintain the decision not to participate in the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul, but "if the situation of repression and violence" is solved in South Korea, Cuba might reconsider its position.

"The games in Seoul were not conceived for the sake of peace and the unification of that artificially divided nation," stated the minister, who arrived today in this capital for an official visit on his Latin American tour that also included Panama, Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay. [passage omitted]

Malmierca said: "In recent months, the world has witnessed repression and violence in Seoul. If these issues are solved, Cuba might reconsider its position."

Fernandez Leads Economic Delegation to Hungary

For a report on the visit by the Jose Ramon Fernandez-led delegation to Hungary, its participation at the 15th Session of the Joint Intergovernmental Commission for Economic and Scientific-Technical Trade held in Budapest on January 27, the signing of a bilateral economic protocol, and meetings with Hungarian officials Deputy Prime Minister Jozsef Marjai,Secretary of the HSWP CC Miklos Nemeth, and Health Minister Judit Csehak, see the Hungary section of the 29 January East Europe DAILY REPORT.

Castro Sends Message of Solidarity to Alfonsin

FL221743 Havana Radio Progreso Network in Spanish 1200 GMT 22 Jan 88

[Text] Cuban President Fidel Castro has sent a message of solidarity to Argentine President Raul Alfonsin in which he says he is deeply pleased that the military uprising was controlled.

One part of the text of Fidel's message says: The immediate future of democracy and peoples rights in the entire southern cone, as well as in all of Latin American and the Caribbean, depends on your struggle in Argentina and that of your government and all democratic forces which support you.

More on Rodriguez, Castro at UNEAC Congress

Rodriguez Speaks

FL292027 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 1800 GMT 28 Jan 88

[Report by Nora Rodriguez Calzadilla from Palace of Conventions; all passages within quotation marks recorded]

[Text] The phrase—culture for the benefit of the revolution—used by Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, member of the PCC Central Committee Politburo, sums up a central point at the fourth congress of the UNEAC [National Union of Cuban Writers and Artists] which is underway at the Palace of Conventions with Commander in Chief Fidel Castro, president of the Councils of State and Ministers, in attendance. After citing significant events in history since the first UNEAC congress, Carlos Rafael noted that the congress coincided with the celebrations of 28 January.

[Rodriguez] "Today is Marti's birthday. We are about to mark the 60th birthday of the guerrilla hero. Montaigne said once that intellectuals are heroes until the time of their death. Marti and Che knew how to be heroes even in beautiful and terrible death. We can really consider them true intellectuals and they take us to the beginning of our analysis of the revolution's intellectual, and of course, the artist and the musician."

The vice president of the Councils of State and Ministers referred to the level of freedom artists and intellectuals enjoy within the revolution to express themselves according to their feelings. He recalled the historic characterization our commander in chief made when he said the revolution cannot give up having all honest men and women, whether or not they are writers or artists, march along with it. Further on, he highlighted the

party's role as a great guide that will only be able to accomplish its highest tasks if it takes into account all the factors that make up our society and shape our reality.

[Rodriguez] "Intellectuals and artists have learned from recent history they should not envision the party as someone sitting behind a desk at the Central Committee giving instructions, well-intentioned perhaps, but [words indistinct]. It is much more than that. For a revolutionary writer, to hold the title of party member is not only evidence he has learned to use Marxism-Leninism as an instrument to interpret life thoroughly and broadly, but also a permanent reminder that his exemplary behavior has not given him new privileges but rather it has brought him greater responsibilities."

Something that made everybody think was that very few young people have attended this congress of Cuban artists and intellectuals. Referring to this topic, Carlos Rafael said:

[Rodriguez] "I believe I will not have to swear to you that I have nothing against older people. [laughter] However, it frightens me that in this congress, in which writers and artists have been able to express their combativity albeit in the calm manner characteristic of their trade, barely 2 percent of the participants are under 30. Jose Marti was less than 30 years old when he began his unrelenting liberation mission. Mella was not even given the chance to reach age 30. Among the signers of the Protest of the (?13), very few were over 25. The editors of (DE AVANCE) magazine were not even 30 years of age, nor was Nicolas Guillen when he wrote "Songoro Cosongo." Just over 20 years, Roa, Jose Antonio Portuondo, Mirta Aguirre, and others were already making their mark in contemporary Cuban letters. Finally, the main character of "History Will Absolve Me," that contemporary manifesto of (?Monte Cristi), was not more than 27 years old when he assumed command of his people."

Castro Closes Congress

FL291347 Havana Tele-Rebelde Network in Spanish 1200 GMT 29 Jan 88

[Text] Commander in Chief Fidel Castro, first secretary of the PCC Central Committee, has closed the fourth congress of the UNEAC, which took place at Havana's Palace of Conventions during the past 3 days.

Fidel said we must work closely with the new generations in order to have people of great culture. He also said the reason for existence of the revolution and socialism is to elevate to the highest level man's abilities and freedom, not only in type but in substance.

Carlos Aldana, secretary of the PCC Central Committee, said earlier that this congress marks a phase in the life of the UNEAC as well as in the scope of Cuban culture. He also noted that the democratization of our whole cultural life is necessary for its future development.

Castro Address

FL291702 Havana Tele-Rebelde Network in Spanish 1233 GMT 29 Jan 88

["Most important moments" of President Fidel Castro' speech at the 28 January closing session of the fourth congress of the UNEAC at Havana's Palace of Conventions, broadcast in progress—recorded]

[Text] ... quality of life of the people. The level of quality of life is not only having tons of material things but tons of spiritual things are also needed. [applause] There are a lot of services that provide a good quality of life such as a good television program or a good movie. Above all, artistic and cultural activities can become one of the highest expressions of quality of life. In other words, a good level of quality of life is being created in this field.

It must be mentioned, as someone was saying here, that a number of cultural projects are underway such as the restoration of Habana Vieja. All kinds of resources are being used in that restoration. Some day, we will go even further. We do not lose hope of completely demolishing that monstrosity capitalism built there, where the Ministry of Education is now, where the country's first university was located. We would like to build the university as it once was. We cannot do it now because we cannot go crazy. But I do not lose hope of seeing the day we demolish that building and rebuild it. The projects under construction in Havana are being built with good taste. All child care centers, schools, and clinics are being built with the old architectural style of the city.

We are not thinking of Habana Vieja alone. We are thinking about using the same criteria in the entire city. We must consider the city's aesthetics. We have assembled a group of architects who will be in charge of a comprehensive development plan. We have told each one of them they have to build a scale model and tell us the kind of architecture and type of building it will be. We are also taking advise. People from developed countries have come here and told us: We don't want you to make the mistakes we did. This whole effort will be driven by an idea which will be present from the beginning; to keep in mind the aesthetics of the city.

That is quality of life. A museum represents the quality of life. An art gallery represents quality of life. Let us hope that the 10 million inhabitants of this country can enjoy the pleasures of that quality of life, that wealth. [applause]

I believe we have talked and discussed matters seriously. All problems have been brought forth. Some of these problems are not easy to solve but I am certain we will find answers. You will not be sorry for the work you have done. You will not be sorry for the things suggested here.

I am sure we are finding solutions to many other problems. I believe we will find solutions to our shortcomings, errors, and limitations in this field because we are guided by good intentions and strategically ambitious ideas. In the same way we will also find solutions in other fields. I am sure of that.

We said that many things have happened since the meeting with intellectuals was held. Today new contingents emerge vigorously despite all our limitations. Back then, we were engrossed in the battle against illiteracy in the midst of the mercenary invasion which took place that same year. If back then it was said that many minds were being lost, it would be difficult to say today that a single mind is wasted in our country in terms of culture and art. It would be very difficult to say that.

I think we will find answers to the problems brought forth here, which guarantee greater development of our art and culture. The day could also come when possibly we will have less dissatisfaction. I have already said we will never be totally satisfied. I think that, even if our comrades from the UNEAC do perfect work, we will make progress. Things will always remain to be done. That optimum level is never reached. Today's optimum level does not necessarily have to be tomorrow's optimum level. With each problem that is solved, new ones arise; there are new challenges in life.

I know what you want. You want a more satisfying job. I know that you truly wish that our country becomes a cultural power. It can be one. I will not go into details. I believe that the freedom and opportunity to become that power par excellence are possible only with the revolution and should be achieved only with socialism. [applause] Something is wrong if it is not achieved with socialism. The problem must be recognized and rectified.

Something that was said to the intellectuals back then can be repeated today. That is: No one should be afraid of the word revolution. We used to say revolution; today we can say revolution or socialism. It can [words indistinct] creative freedom. Therefore, revolution and socialism were created to guarantee that freedom. We will never be tyrants, [word indistinct] that will not be socialism. On the contrary, the reason for existing [word indistinct] is to raise to the highest level man's abilities and opportunities. It is to raise to its highest level man's freedom, not only in form, but also in content. "Fatherland or death, we will win!" [applause]

Correction to Castro Letter on Olympics

The following correction pertains to the item headlined "Fidel Castro Sends Letter to Olympic Committee," published in the 19 January Latin America DAILY REPORT, page 26:

Column one, paragraph four, line seven: ...orderly manner; that they should set aside their highest aspirations and be willing to yield in everything that is not fundamental and that would not violate their principles.(rewording for clarity)

Column two, paragraph four, first line: [Acosta] Fidel Castro added: Despite those negative circumstances, Olympic games held under such dangerous conditions could only be guaranteed, in our opinion, through the miracle of a consensus among the internal political factions of the southern part of Korea—which are now engaged in an irreconcilable struggle—so the games could be held peacefully and be cohosted by both parts of Korea.(rewording for clarity)

Haiti

CASEC Elections, Runoffs To Be Held 31 Jan

FL292123 Port-au-Prince Radio Nationale in Creole 1400 GMT 29 Jan 88

[Text] The Provisional Electoral Council [CEP] has issued a communique announcing there will be runoff elections for deputies.

Many deputies did not obtain the kind of majority they needed for election on 17 January. Therefore, the CEP has decided to hold runoff elections on 31 January 1988. The [communal] section chiefs, the CASEC's [Administrative Council for the Communal Section], will also be elected that day.

The CEP informs the general public that the following candidates will have to participate in a runoff because they did not obtain the type of majority stipulated in Article 45 of the electoral law of 16 December 1987.

Consequently, the voters in the following electoral districts are summoned to the polls on Sunday, 31 January 1988, to vote both for section chiefs and deputies. These elections will take place at the same polling stations from 0600 to 1800 hours.

The CEP also reminds all candidates concerned that they themselves are responsible for printing their own ballots at their own expense.

For the Department of the Artibonite, administrative district of Dessalines, we will tell you what candidates are going to compete:

Samson Pierre-Gilles and Leonidas Felix will participate in a runoff because neither candidate obtained the number of votes that Article 45 of the electoral law requires.

In the Department of the South, administrative district of Coteaux, first electoral district, Brezault Joseph and Joint Lonneux are going to participate in a runoff.

In the Department of the North, in the administrative district of Grande Riviere du Nord, which has only one electoral district, Nixon Dumas and Michel Raphael are to compete in a runoff on 31 January.

In the Department of the Northwest, in the administrative district of Port-de-Paix, which has a single electoral district, Jerome Mazard will participate in a runoff against Josue Lafrance. These two men will run for office again on 31 January to see which one has more supporters.

In the administrative district of Saint Louis du Nord and Anse-a-Foleur, which has only one electoral district, Guillaume Louis and Henriot Bernard are to compete against each other on 31 January.

In the Department of the Northeast, administrative district of Ouanaminthe, Charlot Leosthene and Nathan Pierre Manigat will participate in a runoff.

In the Department of the Southeast, administrative district of Bainet, in the first electoral district, Georges Jacques Magloire Chery and Nelan Jean-Louis will run in the elections.

In the administrative district of (Bel Anse), in the second electoral district—which comprises (?the area from) Grand Gosier (?to) Anse-a-Pitre—Fritz Francois and Henri Paul Leger will be running.

In the Department of the West, sixth electoral district—that is, Delmas—Evans Nicolas and Fritz Pierre are going to run against each other again.

In the administrative district of Arcahaie, in Arcahaie's only electoral district, Pierre Thomas Rene and Guiteau Jean-Philippe will be running.

The runoff to elect deputies will be on 31 January, the day after tomorrow. The elections for CASEC, for section chief, will be on that same day.

Candidates Refuse To Run

FL292148 Port-au-Prince Radio Nationale in Creole 1400 GMT 29 Jan 88

[Text] In connection with the communique issued yesterday by the CEP regarding runoffs, the candidates who won the first time around do not want to participate in a runoff. They say they won the election and they won't participate in a runoff against candidates they have already defeated.

Evans Nicolas, who was elected deputy for the sixth electoral district of Port-au-Prince—the Delmas area—for example, got 12,798 votes. He says there is no way he is going to participate in a runoff. Consequently, he is counting on the understanding of CEP President Jean Gilbert. He is counting on Gilbert to make all the necessary rectifications in connection with his case. Thus Nicolas says he refuses to participate in another election.

Other deputies also have said they will not participate in a runoff.

Mr Pierre Thomas Rene, deputy-elect for the only electoral district in Arcahie/Cabaret, says that on 27 January he received a certificate from the CEP signed by Jean Gilbert authorizing him to register at the Legislative Palace as the elected deputy. He says that since all the formalities have been complied with, the runoff on 31 January does not affect him.

This news release was issued by Pierre Thomas Rene, deputy-elect for the single electoral district for Arcahaie-/Cabaret. He too says that he will not participate in any runoff.

Petition Circulates

FL292318 Port-au-Prince Radio Metropole in Creole 1700 GMT 29 Jan 88

[Text] The Unity Committee for the Respect of the Constitution is taking signatures from people who reject the 17 January 1988 elections. This is called a petition. The petition says: We who are signing this declaration want to let all other Haitian citizens, international organizations, and the governments and peoples of other countries know that we do not acknowledge the 17 January 1988 elections because, even before these elections were held, they were already not in keeping with the nation's Constitution because a majority of the Haitian people refused to participate in these elections and because the elections were a sham, full of all kinds of unscrupulous manuevers, irregularities and fraud.

Those signing this petition will be asking that the Haitian Constitution be respected. The Constitution says that the Haitian people should choose the people to run the country and it forbids all repression, intimidation, arbitrary arrests, and any other acts which fail to respect basic human rights.

The people signing this petition are asked to list their occupation, residence, and their geographical department.

Concerted Action Front Coordinator Arrested

FL292211 Port-au-Prince Radio Nationale in Creole 1400 GMT 29 Jan 88

[Report by Mirebalais correspondent (Johnny Decamp)]

[Excerpt] There was a rumor circulating this morning-,Thursday, 28 January, that (Eiol Casimir) was arrested by Mirebalais police today. (Casimir) is the coordinator for Mr Gerard Gourgue's party, the National Concerted Action Front.

We went to the Mirebalais Barracks to verify this rumor and learned that he was indeed in custody. The reason for (Casimir's) arrest is still unknown and many people are anxious. There are rumors that there will be other arrests. [passage omitted]

Committee Condemns Arrest

FL292227 Port-au-Prince Radio Soleil Network in Creole 1200 GMT 29 Jan 88

[Text] The Haitian Workers Committee [COH] protests the arrest of the National Concerted Action Front [FNC] coordinator in the central plateau.

COH says it condemns the Army in Mirebalais for arresting (Jean Oriol Casimir), FNC coordinator for the lower central plateau with the complicity of macoutes.

COH says it wishes to inform the Haitian people that it has proof Reynold Georges and Jacques Chevry, who became senator and deputy, respectively, on 17 January 1988, have been plotting for the past 2 weeks to have (Casimir) disappear.

The note continues: In view of the great danger and of the arbitrary acts the big macoutes have set up in order to intimidate everyone who rejected these sham elections, the COH condemns without reservation the military in Mirebalais and demands that (Casimir) be released without delay.

The note is signed by (Idli Cameau) for the COH.

Petition Causes Arrest

FL292334 Port-au-Prince Radio Metropole in Creole 1700 GMT 29 Jan 88

[Excerpt] A member of the National Concerted Action Front [FNC] has been arrested in Mirebalais in connection with the petition [of the Unity Committee for the Respect of the Constitution].

Our correspondent, [name indistinct], for the central plateau is going to tell us about the circumstances surrounding the arrest of FNC member (Heriol Casimir).

[Reporter] (Casimir), FNC coordinator for the lower central plateau, was crossing Mirebalais' main street when he was abruptly arrested by a police sergeant on Thursday, 28 January at approximately 1000.

(Casimir's) partisans, family, and friends [words indistinct] are concerned because of the way he was arrested. They say it is not proper because he was apparently not arrested for doing anything wrong and also because he was shown no arrest warrant.

We tried to investigate, but the barracks guard would not give us any explanation. The prefect for the jurisdiction informed us, shortly after 1500, that (Casimir) was being kept in prison and had been arrested because of a petition he was circulating to collect signatures of people who opposed the 17 January elections.

Prefect (Albert Madsen) added that the case was not very serious and that the main reason (Casimir) was being kept in prison was because they were waiting for the district's captain, who was going to decide if (Casimir) would be released or taken to court.

We have learned from an unofficial source that he is to be taken to court sometime today.

We will follow events and keep you informed. [passage omitted]

Front Issues Note

FL292346 Port-au-Prince Radio Metropole in French 1700 GMT 29 Jan 88

[Text] More in connection with the arrest of the member of the National Concerted Action Front [FNC]:

The FNC has protested, saying: This arbitrary act is part of a whole plan of intimidation and harassment directed against all democrats hostile to the 17 January electoral farce organized to impose a president and legislators on the Haitian people that they did not choose.

We are witnessing a real witchhunt. Illegal arrests are now legion throughout Haiti, which implies that the 29 November massacre, the perpetrators of which are still loose in the streets, has not been enough for the Haitian people.

We say: That's enough now! We are not willing to let ourselves be led to the slaughterhouse like cattle. We are alerting national and international public opinion to this macabre plan against Haiti's democrats which has already been put into execution.

In its note, the FNC also demands the immediate release of (Heriol Casimir) and of all the democrats who have been mistreated and put into jail because of their political convictions.

PANPRA Protests Arrest

FL292352 Port-au-Prince Radio Metropole in French 1700 GMT 29 Jan 88

[Text] There is another protest of the [FNC member's] arrest, from PANPRA [Parti National Progressiste Revolutionnaire Haitien—National Progressive Revolutionary Party of Haiti].

PANPRA says: Considering that this arrest was made without a warrant, outside the norms stipulated by law, we protest this illegal and arbitrary act, which constitutes still another violation of the Constitution of 1987 and of human rights. We demand the immediate release of Mr (Jean Heriol Casimir).

Desulme Calls for Suspension of Hostilities

FL292303 Port-au-Prince Radio Metropole in French 1700 GMT 29 Jan 88

[Text] National Labor Party [PNT] leader [Thomas Desulme] says in a communique that he favors a truce and a suspension of hostilities to allow the country to catch its breath.

He explains, in the communique: The 17 January presidential and legislative elections, from which the PNT abstained because we felt the elections went against constitutional order, were held under conditions with which we are all familiar. The PNT denounced them and asked that they be annulled.

The PNT's executive committee met to examine the overall current situation now that the results have been proclaimed. The PNT found itself having to choose between a sterile hardening of line, of the uproot-cassava-plants type, with its foreseeable—and unforeseeable—consequences for national sovereignty and its destructive effects on our already so precarious economic and social structures; and a realistic and pragmatic attitude toward the inevitable, which will allow us to avoid the worst.

The PNT's Executive Committee held discussions in which the pros and cons were weighed. Special attention was given to Mr Manigat's formal declarations of intention as regards his government's independence and the full execution of the RDNP's [Assembly of National Progressive Democrats] program; in particular, respect for civil liberties, orderly reconstruction of the country, and a policy of social reparation to the benefit of the peasant and worker classes, which is the cornerstone of our political philosophy. The facts being what they are, the PNT's executive committee has decided to take note of these declarations and to observe, for the time being, a truce; that is, a suspension of hostilities, to allow our anemic country to catch its breath and to avoid any kind of mishap which might facilitate a return to the traditional despotism. There must be a truce, a suspension of hostilities, so that there can be a pause in this blind and frantic race to reach the presidential chair. And lastly, there must be a truce to allow political parties to organize themselves better so there can be more civic education throughout Haiti.

In its communique, the PNT asks all its members to respect its new watchword and to remain lucid and vigilant in view of all the different directions the current situation could take.

The PNT also calls on all staunch and responsible patriots, who are aware of the country's economic exhaustion and of the daily deteriorating conditions of famine and abject poverty in which the Haitian masses live.

The new elements in this current juncture oblige us, at present, to cope with reality as it is and no longer as it should be. Let us today, more than ever, place the interests of the nation before a desire for power, concludes Thomas Desulme, leader of the PNT, in this press communique dated 29 January 1988.

The PNT leader will meet the press today at party headquarters at around 1330 to once again set forth his position on the current crisis.

Swedish Daily Interviews De la Madrid

PM261155 Stockholm DAGENS NYHETER in Swedish 15 Jan 88 p 11

[Interview with President Miguel De la Madrid in Mexico City by Ewa Thibaud: "Mexico's Peace Work Will Continue Even Without Me"—no date given]

[Text] Mexico City—Mexican President Miguel De la Madrid has a reputation for being a very formal person who smiles infrequently, has very little contact with ordinary Mexicans, and is reserved in his answers to journalists' questions.

He received me in the Los Pinos residence in Mexico City and the meeting began very formally with uniformed guards and "court photographers" with their clicking cameras. The introductory remarks covered the good relations between Mexico and Sweden, De la Madrid's admiration of Olof Palme and his sense of loss after Palme's death, the two countries' joint work on disarmament issues, and the forthcoming six-nation meeting in Stockholm.

DAGENS NYHETER: What do you expect from the meeting in Stockholm and what will the so-called Stockholm declaration contain?

[De la Madrid] "We will analyze the new agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union which is undoubtedly a step forward, but only a step. There is still a lot missing for disarmament to achieve real progress.

"We are bound to express our determination to continue to fight for nuclear and conventional disarmament. We will also reiterate our view that nuclear arms are not only the nuclear powers' responsibility but also the whole world's."

DAGENS NYHETER: One of the six-nation initiative's themes is verifying the observance of a nuclear test ban. Has Mexico the capacity to undertake such verification?

[De la Madrid] "Not alone, but along with the six-nation group and with the help of the United Nations, at a diplomatic level: Yes, there Mexico could be involved in such a role."

DAGENS NYHETER: The six-nation initiative is a coalition of the six countries' leaders, and not so much of the countries themselves. What will happen when you are no longer president?

[De la Madrid] "I do not agree with you. It is not the personalities which are important, but the countries which have traditions of peace. Neither Indira Gandhi's death nor that of Olof Palme has meant that the cooperation has been broken off, and I am convinced Mexico will continue the work for peace and disarmament."

DAGENS NYHETER: Neither India nor Argentina has signed the nonproliferation agreement. Is this not something which affects the group's credibility?

[De la Madrid] "I do not think that this is a fundamental factor. Both have declared that their nuclear research will be used exclusively for peaceful purposes. They have a number of objections to the treaty, but I hope these can be overcome and they will shortly sign the nonproliferation agreement."

DAGENS NYHETER: How do you view developments in Central America, and the role of Mexico and the Contadora group in the ongoing peace process?

[De la Madrid] "Mexico is continuing to try to reconcile the peace negotiators, through the Contadora and Support Groups. We are spurred on by the fact that in the 4 years of Contadora's existence we have succeeded in avoiding increased violence in Central America. Only 4 years ago there was a great danger of an even bigger war. It is also thanks to Contadora that the Central American states have established their own dialogue. We view the Central American presidents' agreement with optimism and are prepared to help toward a peaceful solution to their conflicts."

DAGENS NYHETER: Will Mexico help Nicaragua by resurrecting the San Jose agreement or in some other way? (The San Jose agreement meant that Mexico sold oil on favorable terms to Nicaragua, among others. The agreement was terminated because of Nicaragua's inability to pay).

[De la Madrid] "For reasons of justice we cannot give Nicaragua special treatment compared with the other Central American countries. Nicaragua did not meet the agreement's stipulations and that is why the aid was broken off."

DAGENS NYHETER: At the Acapulco meeting in November there was much talk about independence and autonomy, especially independence from the United States. At the same time there was much talk of increased cooperation between the Latin American countries. What view do you take of such a development?

[De la Madrid] "The meeting between the eight Latin American presidents in Acapulco was in no way an anti-U.S. meeting. We all want good relations with the United States, even though we want greater equality in relations. The important thing about Acapulco is that we met on our own initiative for the first time and in future we will have annual meetings to discuss our problems and to increase economic and political cooperation between our countries."

DAGENS NYHETER: Another of the topics discussed in Acapulco was Cuba's overtures to Latin America. Would you like to have better relations with Cuba even if this was at the expense of your good relations with the United States?

[De la Madrid] "You must remember that Mexico is the only Latin American country to have maintained diplomatic and economic ties with Cuba. This is a sign of our independent foreign policy. We also think it desirable that Cuba should come closer to Latin America, to which the country belongs historically and culturally. We also think it would be a good thing if Cuba normalized its relations with the Latin American organizations and also if it could achieve improved relations with the United States." [De la Madrid Ends] [DAGENS NYHETER]: The economic crisis in Mexico is making its impact felt in all areas of life, from people's real-term wages, which are shrinking rapidly, to negotiations about the country's foreign debt, which totals just over 100 billion dollars.

A few weeks ago Mexico and a number of U.S. banks entered into an agreement whereby Mexico will buy U.S. bonds to a value of 10 billion dollars and will pay around 2 billion dollars.

The U.S. bonds can then be used as security for domestic bonds. The agreement has met with positive reactions; many people believe it is not a solution to the debt problem, but a sign of greater imagination and an increased determination to solve the problems.

[De la Madrid] "It is yet another step, but it is not a definitive solution. We are continuing to seek solutions together with the other Latin American countries, not only solutions to financing problems but also to problems in the trade between our countries and the industrialized countries," De la Madrid said.

DAGENS NYHETER: Argentine President Alfonsin often says that the debt crisis is just as much the lending countries' problem as it is the borrowing countries' problem. Do you agree with him?

[De la Madrid] "Yes, in the sense that foreign debt is an obstacle to the Latin American countries' industrial development and that the industrialized countries' are therefore losing major markets. Also, I do not think it is in the interests of the industrialized nations that the debt crisis leads to instability inside the Latin American countries."

DAGENS NYHETER: Is a moratorium a possible road for Mexico?

[De la Madrid] "We have dismissed a moratorium as a negotiating approach because we do not want to harm other aspects of our economy such as trade zones, foreign investments, and technological cooperation."

DAGENS NYHETER: During your election campaign 6 years ago you talked a lot about "moral rearmament" and about coming to grips with corruption. Have you succeeded?

[De la Madrid] "I think we have made progress, above all at government level. We have passed a number of new laws limiting the power of officials, and we have modernized the system of checks. But I do not say we have succeeded completely in putting a stop to corruption."

DAGENS NYHETER: But Mexico is special. You not only change president every 6 years, but a whole series of officials is replaced, and this prepares the ground for corruption during the final year. Do you intend to adopt any measures to prevent election year corruption?

[De la Madrid] "Yes, we have increased surveillance on officials and on public spending. I believe we have established a surveillance system which reduces the risk of corruption."

DAGENS NYHETER: In the runup to this year's election campaign the PRI put forward six candidates who were allowed to present their views before you chose one of them. Critics have said this was simply playing to the gallery and not a sign of greater democracy.

[De la Madrid] "It was a major democratic step forward; the nomination of our candidate took place a great deal more democratically than previously. In Mexico there is total freedom of speech; you only need to look at the large number of newspapers, at television debates, at street demonstrations. I think there are enough factors to show that Mexico is a democratic country on the whole. And this year's election campaign will be a new step in democratic developments."

DAGENS NYHETER: The name of the PRI is for me a contradiction; revolution means change and institution the opposite.

[De la Madrid] "I think that we Mexicans are right, because no revolution can be achieved without the formation of institutions. The revolutions that have gotten bogged down in the phase of change, the violent phase, have all failed. The revolution must be built into laws and institutions, which confirm the revolution."

DAGENS NYHETER: What will you do next year, when you are no longer president?

[De la Madrid] "I'll think about that when the time comes. Up to 31 December I am responsible for the country; after that I will have plenty of time to think, because then I will retire from politics."

Costa Rica

Poll Indicates Opposition to More Contra Aid

PA312300 San Jose LIBERTAD in Spanish 22-28 Jan 88 p 2

[Unattributed article: "Most Costa Ricans Support Suspension of Aid to Contras"]

[Text] According to a poll conducted by the Psychological Research Institute of the University of Costa Rica, Costa Ricans support the Central American peace plan, agree with suspending U.S. military support for the counterrevolutionary groups, and reject a possible U.S. act of intervention in Nicaragua.

The poll was taken in the San Jose metropolitan area. Its results show that some of the concepts espoused by the mass communications media concerning the Central American conflict, such as the opinion that the conflict is caused by an alleged Cuban and Soviet intervention, have not been believed by people. According to the results of the poll, 61.8 percent of the people believe the United States is the country with the most influence in the isthmus, while very low percentages—3.1 percent and 3.8 percent—believe it is the USSR or Cuba, respectively. The figure for Mexico was 2.5 percent, while 7.5 percent of those questioned believe that both the United States and the USSR jointly have influence. The percentage of do-not-know's or did-not-answer's was 14.7 percent, and there are replies of lower percentages that add to the previous categories.

Of those polled, 77.5 percent agree with the peace plan, while 71.7 percent agree with suspending U.S. military support for the counterrevolutionary groups. When this was asked, those polled were told that the Arias plan signed by the five Central American presidents requires the U.S. Government to suspend that aid so the plan will be successful.

The poll indicates that Costa Ricans do not favor a U.S. invasion of Nicaragua—77.7 percent voiced this opinion, while 18.1 percent said they favor an invasion. As is known, one of the objectives of the U.S. propaganda during recent years—which has been bordering on psychological warfare—is to convince Costa Ricans of the need to "eradicate" the Nicaraguan Government by any means as the only way to resolve the Central American conflict. The results show that this objective has not been achieved.

In addition to this, 59.2 percent of those questioned disagree with the U.S. military presence in Honduras. The estimate of the percentage of the population which believes Oscar Arias is the Central American president who best governs his country is 62.1 percent.

As for evaluating progress made in fulfilling the peace plan, 26.5 percent favor this being done by commissions of the Central American governments, while 26.1 percent believe that the United Nations or the OAS should participate in the evaluation. The relatively low percentage obtained by the Contadora and Support Groups may be the result of another intense propaganda campaign to denigrate their mediation efforts and their member states. Despite this, Costa Ricans express confidence in the international organizations (United Nations and OAS). As is known, various Central American forces believe Esquipulas II is a step forward on the path to peace that must be continued through international negotiations, with the participation of the United States and other members of the Security Council, within the UN framework to attain a definite solution to the regional crisis.

[The following figures were published in boxes at the conclusion of the article]

Have you heard about the peace plan? Yes 88.0 percent No 11.2 percent Don't know/didn't respond 0.8 percent

Do you agree or disagree with the peace plan? Agree 77.5 percent Disagree 5.6 percent Don't know/didn't respond 16.9 percent

Do you agree or disagree with suspending U.S. military support for the groups that fight the Nicaraguan Government? Agree 71.7 percent Disagree 19.6 percent Don't know/didn't respond 8.7 percent

Would you agree or disagree with a U.S. invasion of Nicaragua?

Agree 18.1 percent Disagree 77.7 percent Don't know/didn't respond 4.2 percent

Briefs

Currency Devalued

On Monday, Eduardo Lizano Fait, executive president of the Central Bank, reported a new 6-percent devaluation of the colon. The U.S. dollar will therefore now sell for 73.95 colons. Lizano also said the colon will continue to experience small devaluations throughout the year. [Summary] *[San Jose Radio Impacto in Spanish 1830 GMT 18 Jan 88 PA]*

El Salvador

Democratic Merger Not To Run in March Voting

PA1292202 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 2230 GMT 28 Jan 88

[Text] San Salvador, 28 Jan (ACAN-EFE)—Representatives of the "Democratic Merger," in which two political allies of the Salvadoran guerrillas participate, today announced that they will not field candidates for deputies and councilmen in the municipal elections scheduled for 28 March. Spokesmen for the political coalition

noted, however, that they "will develop and maintain a guiding political presence" during the elections for 60 deputies and 202 municipal councilmen.

The National Revolutionary Movement (MNR) and the Popular Social Christian Movement (MPSC), without splitting from the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), formed the so-called "Democratic Merger" with the Social Democratic Party (PSD) last November.

Its leaders—Ruben Zamora of the MPSC, Hector Oqueli of the MNR, and Reni Roldan of the PSD—stated at a news conference that they will not field candidates in the coming elections.

In explaining the "Democratic Merger's" joint position, Roldan noted that the decision had been made by each of the three organizations, and that each of them will explain the reason for their decision. Oqueli, who returned to the country for the second time in the past few months after having been exiled for more than 8 years, explained that the MNR believes "genuine and basic democratic conditions do not exist in the country." Furthermore, the MNR leader commented that as things stand, the coming elections will not solve the fundamental problems of the nation, a task that is made urgent by the civil war.

For his part, Zamora, who returned with the intention of taking up residence here, said the MPSC is not legally registered, which is why it cannot field candidates. He added that the elections must "go even further and not only solve immediate problems, also but seek ways to end the civil war."

Reni Roldan announced that he cannot at present explain the PSD's reasons [for nonparticipation].

The members of the three-party coalition—two of them Social Democrats, the MNR and the PSD; and one Social Christian, the MPSC—said the fact that they are not fielding candidates in the elections should not be interpreted as an election boycott.

The "Democratic Merger" reiterated its decision to "intensify work" to seek a political solution to the civil war, which began 8 years ago and has left more than 60,000 dead and 7,000 missing.

Ruben Zamora Views Dialogue, Chances for Peace
PA281717 San Salvador Radio Cadena YSU in Spanish 1200 GMT 27 Jan 88

[Report by David Marciano Rivas on news conference by Ruben Zamora, FDR vice president and secretary general of the Social Christian People's Movement, MPSC, on arrival in El Salvador on 26 January with unidentified reporters—passages within quotation marks recorded]

[Text] [Rivas] After 8 years of civil war and bloodshed in El Salvador, prospects for a peaceful solution to the conflict appear more remote today than ever. This is surmised from statements by Salvadoran opposition leader Ruben Zamora, FDR vice president and MPSC secretary general.

Zamora arrived at Comalapa's international airport yesterday afternoon aboard a commercial flight from Mexico to carry out domestic political work.

In his first news conference, which was held last night in one of the leading hotels of San Salvador, Zamora denied there are any immediate prospects for resuming dialogue between the government and the rebels. Zamora said the political attrition rate of the government and the internal conflict within President Duarte's party are fundamental factors in the break in the dialogue with the FMLN and the FDR. Zamora stated that Duarte has no decisionmaking power in negotiations.

[Zamora] "As for dialogue between El Salvador's warring sides, I would like to note that the FMLN and FDR are ready and willing to continue talks to reach concrete agreements. We realize it is not feasible to reach a total, overall agreement now or even over the short term. However, we do believe it necessary to reach concrete agreements on reducing the armed conflict, which would benefit the entire population; human rights and political rights for all Salvadorans; and the relocation or resettlement of war refugees and displaced persons.

"This is our wish, and we believe it would be important to achieve this. However, since the administration of President Duarte is facing a serious political attrition rate, and since his party is facing a serious internal conflict, it is highly unlikely that the government can sit at the negotiating table and have any decisionmaking power. We simply do not see any immediate prospects for resuming the dialogue."

[Rivas] Zamora said he is in El Salvador due to concern over the relative deterioration of the Central American peace process, which began with the signing of Esquipulas II. The FDR vice president criticized the heads of state at the recent summit of Central American presidents—which was held in San Jose, Costa Rica—for focusing on Nicaragua, criticizing the Sandinist government, and overlooking the conflicts in other Central American countries, including El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala.

Zamora also described the relationship between the FDR and the FMLN in this manner:

[Zamora] "Our presence, rather my presence now in El Salvador—which I hope will be for a longer time than my last visit—is prompted by our concern over an apparent increase in violations of human rights in El Salvador. We are also concerned about what we consider to be a relative deterioration in the Central American peace process, which started with the signing of the August 1987 Esquipulas II agreement in Guatemala.

"I believe the five Central American presidents, in their recent meeting in Costa Rica, failed to discuss two issues that concern the region's democratic and progressive forces. First, they seemed to focus too much on the Nicaraguan situation, as if Nicaragua were the only problem in Central America. We all know there are serious problems in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. A regional peace also implies solutions to problems in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala."

"Second, we are also concerned that the work of the International Verification and Follow-Up Commission [CIVS] was forgotten in efforts to achieve peace in Central America. This is a concern regarding efforts various forces made here and elsewhere in 1987 and over the last few months for fostering a regional peace. However, we believe there are positive and encouraging elements in this situation, and that it is necessary to work even harder to bring real peace, with justice and democracy, to all Salvadorans.

"My visit to El Salvador and my organization's work have three main objectives: first, to achieve a national consensus to find a solution to the Salvadoran crisis; second, to foster the work of the Democratic Convergence, which we officially created in late December 1987 and about which we are very optimistic, since recent surveys show it is El Salvador's third political force; and third, to establish the MPSC as a national political party, a nationwide organization rooted in the various social movements of El Salvador. We believe our party should also contribute to the development and growth of the Democratic Convergence.

"[Words indistinct] the FDR political parties are the FMLN's political branch, and that the FMLN is the armed branch of the FDR. That is not, and has never been, true; the FDR is not the FMLN's political branch, and the FMLN is not the armed branch of the FDR. Therefore, it is wrong to say the FDR has an army. There is a political alliance between the two fronts based on achieving a negotiated political settlement to the Salvadoran conflict. That is our case in El Salvador."

[Rivas] Zamora said the 22 March elections for deputies and mayors will not resolve the Salvadoran conflict. According to him, elections in El Salvador are prepared by the U.S. Government to legitimize its foreign policy, which is reflected in a low-intensity conflict.

[Zamora] "I believe the U.S. Government follows a strategy it has unsuccessfully sought to implement in El Salvador, a strategy known as low-intensity conflict. This is not only a military strategy, but also a political one when it entails attempting to legimitize the governments before the international community by holding elections. You have seen this not only in El Salvador, but also in Honduras, Guatemala, and Haiti. Elections are part of an overall U.S. strategy to legitimize its low-intensity war policy in the nation. It does not matter whether those elections really mean anything to the people, or whether they will resolve any problems."

Honduras

Azcona Delivers State of Nation Address

PA2622240 Tegucigalpa Voz de Honduras in Spanish 1705 GMT 25 Jan 88

[Speech by President Jose Azcona before National Congress live or recorded]

[Text] Mr President of the National Congress, Mr President of the Supreme Court of Justice, Mr Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, messrs deputies, messrs members of the cabinet, messrs magistrates of the Supreme Court of Justice; your excellencies messrs ambassadors and chiefs of diplomatic missions accredited before the government of the Republic; honorable members of the Superior Defense Council; ladies and gentlemen:

Fulfilling my constitutional duty, I come before this honorable legislative chamber to present a report on the work done during the 2d year of my Presidency. I am here to explain the main achievements, so the Honduran people and their representatives will learn how my government is working.

Two years after having taken over, our basic goal continues to be to strengthen the democratic system to guarantee our people the spiritual and material achievements to which they are entitled. We are striving hard and working to the extent of our ability to achieve this.

By conviction and in line with democratic principles, we have always been respectful of the other state branches. Messrs deputies, you can vouch for this. It is not easy to build a democracy in a country such as ours where confrontations, and not a consensus, have been the traditional way of coping with our problems.

I am pleased to add that the political dialogue begun by the parties' leaderships is a hopeful improvement that we hope will become a permanent factor in solving conflicts.

Our country's democracy is beginning to bloom, and, therefore, we must have patience, perseverance, and wisdom to be able to maintain, consolidate, and improve it. We will not step backward. No matter how big the challenge may be, our determination should be greater so that we can all continue walking down this path in achieving our goals to build a better, greater, and stronger Honduras for the benefit of all Hondurans.

It has been our turn to rule in difficult times. Beyond our borders, our Central American brethren are fighting a fratricidal war. With our foresight, we Hondurans have understood the problems of contemporary society, and thus we can state that our basic goals are to maintain the

internal peace and social tranquillity of the fatherland. We are not ignoring the undesirable acts of violence that have taken place. My administration regrets and condemns such tragic events.

Today, before this honorable assembly, I hereby reaffirm my unyielding determination to fight with all my might to eliminate violence, because this is the most uncivilized manner of settling disputes.

Democracy should not be just a mere formality based on a legal system. Democracy is and should be the authentic expression of the people, where nobody will prevail over another, where no group will take it upon itself to decide what is the truth and what is a lie, what is good and what is bad for the fate of the fatherland.

Democracy is a respect for the citizens' rights, it is a respect for the powers of the state—where each power has its obligations. The president of the Republic, as the head of the Executive Branch, administrates, directs, and represents the nation. The Legislative Branch issues the laws the people and the country need for development. The Judicial Branch applies justice.

I have carefully respected this republican principle contained in our Constitution, and I have acted within the framework of independence and mutual respect. From the moment I took over as president of the Republic, my greatest concern has been to try to improve the standard of living of the vast majority of the population, seeking the people's well-being. However, it is up to all Hondurans to strive so that our women, men, and children will not look toward an uncertain future, but rather to a hopeful horizon where all will be able to rise to better and greater individual and collective opportunities, to satisfy their cultural, social, and economic needs.

That is why we have guided our economic policy toward the well-being of the majority by developing production and employment. We have prepared a development plan for 1987-90 with five objectives: sustained economic development, financial security, creation of jobs, overall territorial development, and meeting the basic needs of the majorities.

It is up to the government to plan and create the necessary conditions for achieving economic development, but it is up to the entire nation to make a great effort so that the plan can guarantee the provision of basic needs such as food, health, and employment for the entire population.

In our efforts to achieve economic reactivation, my government has continued with its economic policy of stability with growth. The achievements reached prove that we have made the right economic decisions. Even if we allow for the limitations under which we have worked this past year, we have obtained the following results: A national growth of 4.2 percent; the lowest inflation rate in Latin America of 2.5 percent; a reduction of the fiscal deficit from 8.2 percent to 6.9 percent in terms of production; and an increase in revenues by 11.8 percent, which is the equivalent of 136 million lempiras. It is noteworthy that this increase was achieved without creating new taxes and without increasing current taxes.

In net foreign exchange reserves, we made a profit of 64.3 million lempiras. In the educational field, there was a total enrollment of 1,174,661 students at various lavels. A total of 36,067 adults were taught to read and write, and 2,762 students received the benefits of [words indistinct]. A total of 462 school facilities were built throughout the country, 33 buildings and 67 classrooms were repaired, and 1,108 teaching jobs were created.

In the field of public health, there were two extensive vaccination programs that protected 458,705 children. Polio cases dropped from a total of six to four. Eradicating this disease is the goal for 1990. In the food and nutrition program, 41,127 persons were covered.

As for investments in health, it is interesting to point out that the Northwestern Hospital of San Pedro Sula was built and provided with equipment. Construction of the Comayagua, San Marcos de Ocotepeque, and La Esperanza Hospitals was also completed.

We must emphasize that 1,807 health workers are now covered by the civil service system. These workers had been working under another system, many of them at subminimum wages. This is a correction to what is printed in the report you will be given. It reports a total of 1,087 workers, but the correct figure is 1,807 workers.

In the rural sector during 1987, a total of 12,059.87 hectares were distributed to benefit 155 peasant groups comprising 1,949 families. One hundred and forty permits for land occupation involving 16,275 hectares were granted to peasant groups, as well as 295 individual land occupation permits involving 954 hectares. Likewise, 431 loans were granted to an equal number of peasant groups for a total of 4,074,279 lempiras. In addition, 148 cooperatives were endorsed with a total amount of 14,705,961 lempiras.

A total of 115 km of highways were paved, and approximately 600 km of primary and secondary highways were built at the [word indistinct] level. In addition, 702 linear meters of concrete bridges were built, as well as 96 linear meters of wooden-module bridges. Sixteen km of highways were paved with hydraulic cement, and maintenance work was done on over 7,000 km of existing highways. In Roatan, we are continuing to work on the main airport landing strip, which will be ready for use this year. Its strip will measure 1,950 meters long and 45 meters wide.

A great boost has been given to rural electrification. Expansions and improvements have been made to the electrical distribution system. This was particularly accomplished in poor neighborhoods in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro, with an investment of 13 million lempiras.

Agreements were also reached for the electrification of Copan, Ocotepeque, Lempira, El Paraiso, Olancho, and Yoro Departments.

As for the agricultural and cattle-raising sector, we report that we have given technical assistance to 34,579 farmers. Five projects for integrated rural development are still under way, with a total investment of 172 million lempiras.

We imported 3,200 heads of dairy cattle to encourage production, and we worked on a program for small irrigation projects.

As for housing, we built 662 houses in the rural region, with an investment of 1.5 million lempiras. We additionally built 989 houses in the urban region, with an investment of 9.9 million lempiras.

We invested 7.3 million lempiras to improve waterworks and sewage systems in Tegucigalpa. A total of 196 waterworks and sewage system projects are now being built in the rural region, with an investment of 18.3 million lempiras, to benefit 356,278 citizens around the country.

As for foreign financing, loan contracts and donations amounting to 868 million lempiras were finalized with friendly governments and international organizations. These funds will be assigned to the agricultural, cattle, health, energy, and construction sectors, as well as to road improvements, etc.

Foreign exchange certificates through exports were approved to promote the export of nontraditional products. In addition, the monetary program was aimed at the economic recovery with great [word indistinct] in private sector financing.

The privatization program has been continued, and four enterprises were already privatized. We sent several bills to Congress aimed at improving the administration. These bills include the customs tariffs, the customs law, the customs valorization law, and other important measures.

The report I am presenting describes in greater detail the projects carried out and the achievements attained by my government. I hope you know how to appreciate the effort we have made.

Honorable representatives of the people, as for foreign policy, we report that in 1987, we intensified diplomacy aimed at bringing about normalization in Central America.

Despite the efforts of Honduras, the Contadora process has been suspended since June 1986. In February 1987, at the invitation of President Oscar Arias Sanchez, I visited Costa Rica to learn about his political initiatives, which preceded the document: procedures to establish a firm and lasting peace in Central America, signed at the Guatemalan summit on 7 August 1987.

The negotiations that preceded the Esquipulas II agreement was based on the proposal of President Arias and that of Honduras on the Central American peace initiatives.

We have faithfully complied with the accords that have resulted from this process. I appointed the National Reconciliation Commission through Executive Agreement Nos 808 and 987 of 3 November 1987.

I also later sanctioned an ample and unconditional amnesty contained in Legislative Decree No 199-87 of 29 November 1987. This amnesty was approved at the request of the National Reconciliation Commission.

Always with the intention of fully complying with the Esquipulas II agreement, I authorized the on-site inspection of our national territory for any effective confirmation needed by the International Verification and Follow-Up Commission. This body visited the country on 11 and 12 January 1988.

In the same spirit, I participated in the presidents' meeting held in Costa Rica on 14 and 15 January, where we reiterated our faith in the Esquipulas II agreement as the ideal document to achieve regional peace and democracy.

At the recent Costa Rican summit, the theories of my government were included in the San Jose declaration. The verification and follow-up process thus is now in the hands of the Central Americans by virtue of an executive commission composed of the Central American foreign ministers, and relying on the cooperation of regional and extraregional states and other organizations.

The presidents promised to fulfill unconditional and unilateral obligations, such as a dialogue to reach an agreement on a cease-fire, a general amnesty, and democratization. This includes the lifting of the state of emergency, complete freedom of the press, political pluralism, and the elimination of special courts.

My government has complied, and continues to comply, in good faith, with the Guatemala accords ratified at the San Jose meeting.

Honorable deputies, these are, briefly, the main projects carried out and the achievements attained during the 2d year of my administration. The secretaries of states will

present to this honorable chamber the complete document of the work carried out by each of their respective ministries in which they detail the works and achievements attained during this year.

Today, just as yesterday, I demand from you and all Hondurans that we give the Republic all our creative energy and place the necessary items at the disposal of the Honduran people. This is so that the people and the government can together build a better Honduras to benefit the generations of today and tomorrow. This is my wish.

Since today is the day of peace and the day on which the fatherland honors Honduran women, I—with the permission of this honorable chamber—would like to affectionately greet all women of this country and express a message of faith in Honduras' destiny, a destiny that, to a great extent, depends on the efforts and dedication of our women. Thank you.

Nicaragua

Further on Ortega Visit to Western Europe

Vows Continued Contra Talks

PA011427 Managua Radio Sandino in Spanish 1200 GMT 1 Feb 88

[Text] Oslo—AFP reports President Daniel Ortega has asked Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland for her country's participation in an international group that will supervise the Central American peace process. In a news conference, the prime minister said she will accept Ortega's request if other Latin American countries agree with the participation of her country. Brundtland stated that Norway will continue to support the Central American peace effort, and stressed that President Ortega did not ask her nation to pressure the United States. The Central American peace agreement states that no power should intervene in the region, and this is also Norway's position, the prime minister noted.

Meanwhile, President Ortega declared that his government will continue to negotiate with the contras even if the U.S. Congress approves aid to the counterrevolutionaries. He told a news conference: I sent a letter to U.S. President Ronald Reagan requesting immediate negotiations in Washington, Managua, or any other place to resolve the issues between our two countries.

During President Ortega's brief visit, Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland promised to send oil to Nicaragua. She also stated that her country is willing to participate in the verification commission that supervises the Central American peace plan signed in August by the Central American presidents.

The prime minister, who spoke for more than 1 hour with President Ortega, said Norway is willing to supply oil instead of fertilizers as part of its development aid to Nicaragua. Norway increased its aid to Nicaragua this year from 60 to 75 million kroner, or from $9.5 to $11.8 million. Norwegian nongovernmental organizations also are donating approximately 40 million kroner to Nicaragua.

Official on Ortega Papal Talks

PA300431 Managua Domestic Service in Spanish 0145 GMT 30 Jan 88

[Interview with Julio Lopez, head of the International Relations Department, by Carlos Jose Guadamuz, director of La Voz de Nicaragua, in Rome—live]

[Excerpt] [Passage omitted] [Lopez] The fact is that the meeting with the pope, as President Ortega said, was very constructive, and it undoubtedly is both a considerable and quite significant effort in the search for peace in Central America. The results of Ortega's meeting with the pope have been so positive that even the international media which are hostile to peace, to the efforts of the Nicaraguan Government, and to our people's struggle have been absolutely unable to publish a single negative report. Their [results of the meeting] importance has forced them to employ the argument that the meeting was rather cold. This, however, counters the Vatican's official position and the personal position of the Holy Father. The Nicaraguan delegation in Italy therefore fully shares the conviction that this effort by President Ortega with the world's highest moral and spiritual authority, who supports the peace efforts, is an unprecedented fact.

I must openly state that the debate and rapprochement between the Nicaraguan Government, the Holy See, and the Nicaraguan church aim to promote peace. This is very important for the Nicaraguans and especially for our fighters' mothers, who are anxiously awaiting progress in the struggle for peace. Therefore, the smallest minority sectors of international reaction have not so far been able to find a single element, argument, or consistent pretext to stand in the way of such an unprecedented event as today's. The fact is that the Holy Father and the Nicaraguan president have fully agreed that the only thing that can be done for the Central American conflict is to support peace and the Esquipulas agreement. This is a rejection and repudiation of President Reagan's request for continued funds for the war, funds that would contradict both the wishes of the Central American presidents and the wishes of the world's highest spiritual authority.

[Guadamuz] Comrade Lopez, you were present at President Ortega's meetings with Italian President Francesco Cossiga and Prime Minister Giovanni Goria. What was the atmosphere at these talks, and how would you assess them?

[Lopez] As I said before, President Ortega basically made the following statements to the leaders he met with. He first expressed the need to find practical ways to

implement the latest agreements of the Central American presidents concerning the appointment of an international verification and follow-up commission, one that can include countries from within and without the region, and international organizations. In response to this statement by President Ortega, which is simply a practical, dynamic implementation of the accords signed by the five presidents, I can undoubtedly and responsibly state that he received a highly positive response. Of course, the Italian Government and officials must, in a responsible manner, carefully examine the practical possibilities of making progress in that direction. The Nicaraguan position has received a positive response.

Meanwhile, President Ortega has stated that if a consensus is not quickly reached among the Central American countries to implement the agreement signed at the San Jose summit, the Nicaraguan Government is willing to form an international commission to verify Nicaragua's strict compliance with the commitments President Ortega undertook in San Jose.

Furthermore, not only has there been a positive attitude on the part of the Spanish and Italian Governments, but they have also openly acknowledged that the Nicaraguan revolutionary government has been brave and firm, since it is willing to submit its own fulfillment of the verification and control commitments. Therefore, I can say that President Ortega's main objective of promoting the survival of the Esquipulas agreement and the survival of peace in Central America has been successful in Spain and Italy. I have no doubt that at his next stop he will also find support. In concrete terms, this means that political opinion, public opinion, the leading Latin American governments, and, in these cases, the Western European governments all favor peace. In other words, the policy of the Reagan administration is inevitably moving toward international isolation.

Vatican Issues Communique

PA292023 Managua Domestic Service in Spanish 1415 GMT 29 Jan 88

[Official Vatican Press Office communique, issued in Vatican City on 29 January; read by Manuel Espinoza, minister of information for the Presidency—live]

[Text] President Ortega has explained to the Holy Father the outlook for and latest developments under the Arias regional peace plan. He has also asked the Holy See to support this process.

The Holy Father has confirmed that he follows with interest every day, in his thoughts and prayers, the drama that the people in Central American states have been enduring for several years now and which has claimed so many victims and caused so many particularly painful trials and deprivations.

His Holiness constantly hears about the suffering of those people, and he hopes that peace is achieved. He has confirmed to President Ortega that he will support and demand that peace in the region be attained, while underscoring the need for peace to be achieved through an honest dialogue that respects the rights and basic freedom of everyone.

Likewise, the Holy Father has renewed the hope expressed in the 9 January speech to the diplomatic corps. This means the hope that all the points in the peace plan will be effectively implemented, and that nothing will be left out. This is particularly true of the people's right to live in a political regime according to the principles of a true democracy. The support of the Holy See and the entire church cannot fail, which is proven by the mediatory role that Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo and other priests have agreed to play.

Denby Trial Concludes; Sentencing Scheduled

PA300030 Managua Domestic Service in Spanish 2300 GMT 29 Jan 88

[Report by Raul Oviedo]

[Text] The trial of James Jordan Denby concluded today following a 6-hour session. All that remains to be done is the sentencing, which is scheduled for Monday. However, defense lawyer Owyn Hodgson will ask for additional time.

During questioning, Denby blamed his violation of Nicaraguan airspace on bad weather, claiming he had received authorization from the La Ceiba airport control tower in Costa Rica. All evidence, including articles published in U.S. magazines, proves that he participated in terrorist acts against the Nicaraguan people. According to the prosecutor, despite [Denby's] denials, the evidence proves the charges. Under the law, the penalty can range from 5 to 30 years in prison. We shall await sentencing during the next few days.

Denby 'Unexpectedly' Released

PA302000 Paris AFP in Spanish 1856 GMT 30 Jan 88

[Text] Managua, 30 Jan (AFP)—The Nicaraguan Government today unexpectedly released U.S. citizen James Jordan Denby, who was captured on 6 December in southeastern Nicaragua when the Army shot down his plane.

The prisoner was going to be sentenced by justice tribunals next Tuesday based on the charge of aiding the Nicaraguan "contras." However, State Security today handed him over to Bill Press, Democratic senatorial candidate from the state of California.

Press said Denby will be immediately flown to California aboard a private aircraft.

Vice President Comments

PA310345 Managua Domestic Service in Spanish 0313 GMT 31 Jan 88

[Text] Tonight, Vice President Sergio Ramirez Mercado explained the release of James Jordan Denby. He stated that it was in accordance with a judicial order. Here is what Ramirez Mercado said:

[Begin Ramirez Mercado recording] Well, the government position is that it immediately complied with a release order issued by the judge hearing this case. You know that when the state of emergency was lifted and constitutional guarantees were restored, the cases of all those prisoners who were being tried in the special courts were transferred to common courts. Then the case of Mr Denby, which was being heard at a special court, was transferred to one of the Managua district criminal courts. Last night, this judge issued a provisional release order—with bail, which was duly paid.

We, through the Ministry of Justice and the Office of the Attorney General, looked into the procedure of this trial. We confirmed that bail was duly paid. By we, I am referring to the executive branch, as represented by the Ministry of Justice. Once the release order was issued and bail was allowed for the prisoner to leave the country, the Ministry of Interior, through the National Penitentiary System, then immediately complied with the judge's order.

Thus, a legal procedure was followed, and that is how Mr Denby left the country. [end recording]

Further Reportage on San Jose Peace Talks

No Agreement Reached

PA292017 San Jose Radio Impacto in Spanish 1900 GMT 29 Jan 88

[Report by Luis Manuel Mora Sanchez]

[Text] With marked skepticism, delegates of the Nicaraguan rebels and of the Sandinist regime were still meeting today at noon at the Paso Ancho Central Seminar.

Thus far, as we journalists often say, no white smoke has yet appeared. After 2 consecutive days of talks between rebels and Sandinists, apparently no initial agreement has yet been reached.

Radio Impacto learned that the two delegations this morning basically discussed the possibility of holding a new meeting in Guatemala or Managua, which could take place on 14 or 16 February.

Another subject the two delegations discussed were the zones where the Sandinist government believes the Nicaraguan Resistance [RN] forces should locate. However, the RN stated that these areas are the same ones previously proposed by the Sandinist regime, adding that the names of rivers and territories have been added to give the impression that it is a new and larger expanse.

A news conference has been scheduled for this afternoon at approximately 1330, when the agreements, if any, will be announced.

In conclusion, we can say that 2 days after the talks between the Sandinists and rebels began, no agreement has been reached. So far, there are only reports concerning a new meeting scheduled for mid-February. It could take place in either Managua or Guatemala.

Mediator: Talks 'Successful'

PA292252 Paris AFP in Spanish 2101 GMT 29 Jan 88

[Excerpt] San Jose, 29 Jan (AFP)—At the end of the first round of talks in San Jose, Costa Rica, Sandinist government officials and the Nicaraguan contras decided to hold another round of direct negotiations in Guatemala on 10 to 12 February. Msgr Bosco Vivas, auxiliary bishop of Managua and mediator for these talks, described the meeting, which began today at 0900 (1600 GMT) and ended at 1400 GMT (2100 GMT) [local and GMT times as received], as "successful." He added it could even be said that "a formal, verbal cease-fire [agreement] had been reached."

Vivas admitted that the dialogue process is difficult, but he added it is possible that a definite cease-fire could be achieved at the upcoming meeting in Guatemala City. This cease-fire would end a war that has been bleeding Nicaragua for the past 7 years.

The Sandinist government, represented by Deputy Foreign Minister Victor Hugo Tinoco, has presented an agenda for the second round of talks. It is expected that Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo, the mediator in this dialogue, will attend the meeting in Guatemala City.

Meanwhile, the RN delegates have announced they will draft a proposed agenda this week and will present it to the representatives of the Catholic Church who are acting as mediators in this dialogue.

At the close of this round of talks—which lasted for 3 hours on Thursday and 5 hours on Friday—Bishop Vivas noted that "firm steps have been taken" to reach a cease-fire in Nicaragua.

Bishop Vivas indicated that the Guatemala City talks could end the war in Nicaragua.

Likewise, Vivas announced that each delegation would hold a separate news conference this afternoon to list the results of the meeting, which was held within the framework of the Esquipulas II peace process.

The talks, which were held at the San Jose seminary, were faced with irreconcilable differences from the start. The Sandinists were bent on discussing only the question of a cease-fire, while the contras presented a list of requests that had to be met prior to discussing this topic. [passage omitted]

Tinoco: Meeting 'Positive'

PA292333 Managua Domestic Service in Spanish 2223 GMT 29 Jan 88

[Text] In a news conference he held after meeting with representatives of the contras, Nicaraguan Deputy Foreign Minister Victor Hugo Tinoco termed the talks as highly positive. He emphasized the positive nature of the meeting and stated that the Nicaraguan Government is firmly committed to holding these talks.

Soon afterward, Jaime Morales Carazo, head of the contra delegation, used the terms respectful, frank, calm, and sincere to describe the nature of the meeting. Morales Carazo, who is a Somozist businessman, noted that the two sides exchanged proposals and agreed not to accept, reject, or (?modify) them. [sentence as heard] Actually, Carazo commented, a verbal cease-fire [accord] was agreed upon.

Government, Yatama Conclude Talks; Issue Note

PA300119 Managua Domestic Service in Spanish 2332 GMT 29 Jan 88

[Communique issued by the government and Yatama [Organization of Miskito, Sumu, and Rama Indians and Creole Groups] in Puerto Cabezas on 29 January]

[Text] From: The Nicaraguan Government and Yatama

To: The Nicaraguan people, especially the people of the Atlantic coast, and the international community

For the sake of reconciliation, lasting peace, and the development of the Atlantic coast, the Nicaraguan Government and Yatama met in Managua on 26 to 28 January and held cordial, honest, and friendly peace talks. This meeting was the result of previous negotiations carried out by the Moravian Church and CEPAD [Evangelical Committee for Aid to Development], during which the guidelines for these talks were established. The following were the guidelines:

1. That the talks be held within the efforts and spirit of Esquipulas II.

2. That the talks be direct.

3. That the talks be held at the highest level without previous conditions and with an open agenda.

4. That Yatama participate in these talks as an independent organization and without ties to other forces.

During the first round of talks, we reached the following agreements:

1. To appoint a reconciliation commission formed by the Moravian Church and CEPAD. This commission will act as a liaison, formally preside over the talks, issue recommendations, and ensure that the talks are held properly and that the agreements are kept.

2. To invite Canada, Costa Rica, Cuba, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden to witness the agreements and to offer their moral and material support to the Atlantic coast peace and development process. We have agreed to invite the ambassadors of the aforementioned countries or their representatives to a meeting on 28 January to inform them of the agreements reached to date.

3. To respond affirmatively to a call made by the Moravian Church and CEPAD, and to issue orders to our forces to respect a temporary halt in all offensive military operations during the negotiations.

4. To travel to Puerto Cabezas and Bluefields to inform the people of this peace initiative, and to tell them we have reached some agreements concerning the rights of the Indian and Atlantic coast peoples.

5. To continue talks on the other topics included on the agenda that have yet to be discussed.

Issued in Puerto Cabezas on 29 January 1988

Signing on behalf of the Nicaraguan Government: Tomas Borge

Signing on behalf of Yatama: Brooklyn Rivera

9th Mixed Cuban Commission Meeting Opens

PA291739 Managua Sistema Sandinista Television Network in Spanish 0200 GMT 27 Jan 88

[Text] The ninth session of the mixed Cuban-Nicaraguan commission opened today. It will evaluate our economic cooperation with that Caribbean island since the triumph of the Sandinist people's revolution.

Commander of the Revolution Henry Ruiz opened the session. He noted Cuba's cooperation in the areas of health, education, agriculture, scientific-technical development, and other important sectors of the Nicaraguan economy:

[Begin unidentified speaker recording] We are meeting this year at a moment when talks are under way in Washington concerning new funds for another kind of economic aid. The intent of that aid also differs from the aid we will discuss in this session. [end recording]

Ernesto Melendez, president of the State Committee for Economic Cooperation, said that despite limitations, they [Cuba] will continue to help Nicaragua:

[Begin Melendez recording] (?We are currently involved) in helping the people. We are willing to share our knowledge and our achievements. Despite Cuba's economic and financial limitations—which are mainly imposed on us by the international economic crisis—we are willing to share these things with the brother Nicaraguan people. [end recording]

This week, the Cuban delegation will visit projects that have received Cuban aid to assess the level of progress and development that have been achieved.

Cuba's Melendez Meets Mercado

FL291721 Havana Radio Progreso Network in Spanish 1200 GMT 29 Jan 88

[Text] Yesterday Sergio Ramirez Mercado, acting Nicaraguan president, met in Managua with Ernesto Melendez, minister president of the Cuban State Committee for Economic Cooperation. Melendez is leading the Cuban delegation attending the ninth meeting of the joint intergovernmental commission.

An analysis of bilateral cooperation was made, especially the assistance Nicaragua receives from public health specialists and professionals. Energy cooperation was also discussed at the meeting.

Briefs

Justice Official Appointed

Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega has appointed Omar Cortez Ruiz as vice minister of justice. Ortega filled the vacated Justice Ministry post when Vice Minister Alba Luz Ramos was appointed Supreme Court Justice. [Summary] *[Managua Radio Sandino in Spanish 1200 GMT 26 Jan 88 PA]*

Panama

Abadia on Blandon Plan, U.S. Relations

PA302143 Panama City LA PRENSA in Spanish 29 Jan 88 p 26A

[Report by Lisette Carrasco]

[Text] Panamanian Foreign Minister Jorge Abadia Arias said yesterday he is surprised by the position of Jose I. Blandon, Panama's New York consul, who has made grave charges against General Manuel Antonio Noriega, the commander in chief of the Panama Defense Forces, to U.S. Government authorities.

In a statement to LA PRENSA, Abadia Arias said he does not know about the publicized "Blandon plan," a document drafted by Gen Noriega's former military intelligence adviser. The proposal was drafted as a solution to the political, economic, and social crisis that our country has faced since June.

Regarding the diplomatic relations between Panama and the United States, Abadia Arias said "relations are still lukewarm, they are still not favorable. From the government's standpoint, we believe the close relations we have always maintained with the United States have deteriorated considerably ." However, he added they have significantly improved during the past few days.

Asked if he felt that in view of this year's upcoming elections in the United States, U.S. policy toward Panama will improve with a new U.S. Government, Abadia Arias said he could not answer that question, as he does not have the information needed to judge.

However, he said in his opinion, U.S. elections have become a springboard "that has led to gaps [desfases] in their policy" toward their allies. One of those gaps in U.S. foreign policy is the "Blandon plan," he said.

Abadia added "when there is a political confrontation, when there are political differences, when U.S. elections are near," both the Democratic and Republican Parties use anything they believe will help reach their goal: winning the presidential elections.

Asked if Blandon was one of those instruments used by the two political forces, Abadia Arias said "they would use anything they deem necessary to conduct their foreign policy according to their own security."

"The U.S. Government is trying to change the Panamanian way of government," and in order to do that, it is exerting all kinds of pressures, he said. The latest pressure has been economic, and it has been relentlessly maintained, he stressed.

Abadia Arias added the reason for U.S. economic pressures against Panama "is that they cannot accept the idea of having to leave the canal area by the year 2000."

Daily Cites Blandon Charges Against Noriega

PA311801 Panama City LA PRENSA in Spanish 31 Jan 88 p 1

[Unattributed article: "Blandon Confirms Charges Against Noriega; HERALD Publishes His Statements on the General's Illegal Activities"]

[Text] Jose Isabel Blandon, former Panamanian consul general in New York who served on many occasions as Noriega's envoy on delicate political and intelligence missions, gave THE MIAMI HERALD exclusive information in mid-December with the promise that it would not be published until he authorized it. However, on Friday, Senator Alfonse D'Amato, Republican from

New York, disclosed what Blandon had said and THE MIAMI HERALD published it in its Saturday issue. We are summarizing this report as follows:

By Sam Dillon and Andres Oppenheimer

General Manuel Antonio Noriega's participation in international contraband activities began a decade ago when, as Panama's main intelligence officer, he directed a clandestine network which channeled weapons to leftist guerrillas in the region, according to statements by former close aides of Noriega and U.S. investigators. The arms deals brought Noriega in contact with the Colombian drug czars.

According to Blandon, with Noriega's knowledge, high-ranking FDP [Panama Defense Forces] officers received $5 million from Colombian drug czars to turn a blind eye to the establishment of a cocaine processing laboratory in Panama's Darien Province in 1984. Panamanian troops stormed the laboratory later that year while Noriega was out of the country.

According to Blandon, Noriega ordered the release of 23 Colombian drug traffickers arrested in the Darien operation after Castro mediated in indirect negotiations between Noriega and representatives of the Medellin cartel. Blandon said that the Colombian drug traffickers were furious over the seizure of the laboratory and demanded that the bribe money be returned to them.

Noriega sponsored many clandestine arms shipments to leftist guerrillas of El Salvador and Colombia from 1979 to 1983, using an alleged recording studio in the Panamanian capital as a clandestine exhibit room, according to another former Noriega aide.

Blandon said that Noriega offered to resume the arms shipments to the Salvadoran guerrillas after a 4-year halt. Blandon's statements agree with information supplied by Major Roger Miranda, an important Nicaraguan military defector.

FDP Major Edgardo Lopez, who was in Miami on Friday, described the charges against Noriega as "ridiculous" and said that Blandon was never in Noriega's intimate circle so he did not have access to the information that he claims to possess.

"Drugs flooded Panama," according to Blandon, who personally observed Noriega's rise. Noriega established a system by which the G-2 agents arrested local cocaine dealers in the neighborhoods, confiscated the drug, and then supplied it to Noriega's own dealers who then shared the profits with him, the former official said in several taped interviews with the HERALD.

On some occasions, Noriega's agents escorted couriers who carried cocaine concealed in picture frames through the Torrijos airport without being inspected by customs, the former aide said.

Blandon recalled that in 1978, a lieutenant—today an FDP commander—who worked for Noriega ordered a cocaine package be placed in a single-engine airplane owned by a Colombian dealer who had landed in Paitilla. The next day the police confiscated the package and deported the Colombian.

Blandon said that Noriega began smuggling arms in 1979 when he managed a network of pilots created by Torrijos to transport weapons to the Sandinists who were then fighting Somoza. After Torrijos died in an air accident in 1981, Noriega continued the arms contraband.

One of those who participated in Noriega's arms network was his relative, Carlos Wittgreen, currently one of his closest business associates, according to two former officials familiar with the operation. According to the Federal Court files, Wittgreen was prosecuted in Miami in May 1979 for smuggling arms for the Sandinists from Miami to Panama but the charges were dropped after the Sandinists' victory.

Weapons for the Salvadoran Guerrillas [subhead]

Shortly after the Sandinist victory, Noriega began to sell arms to the Salvadoran guerrillas, who had collected a war fund of $100 million through kidnappings. Blandon said that although Noriega expressed his fondness for the Salvadoran guerrillas, the arms trafficking had one purpose: to make money. Noriega's pilots received $20,000 for each flight from Panama to the Salvadoran war zone. Blandon said that the pilots made "two or three flights a week" during the peak time of the operation.

The business began with the spoils of war from the Nicaraguan revolution. Thereafter, Noriega's arms smugglers began to get them from the European black market, Blandon said.

Salvadoran officials protested the arms smuggling activities in June 1980 after a plane loaded with ammunition flown by Pilot Cesar Rodriguez crashed in El Salvador. Floyd Carlton, another pilot involved in the operation, flew to the disaster area to rescue Rodriguez. They both denied the reports in official statements, and no legal action was taken against them.

Blandon estimated that he met with Salvadoran guerrilla leaders at least 15 times between 1979 and 1983. "They told me about their need for weapons, and I passed the information on to Noriega," Blandon recalled. "They always said thank you in subsequent meetings."

Blandon said that the airlifts to the rebels arrived regularly at the Colon Free Zone in sealed containers aboard small cargo planes. Customs officials were instructed not to inspect the sealed containers that were occasionally stored in a storeroom belonging to "Explosa," an explosives manufacturing firm owned by the FDP, he added. The weapons were taken to the main floor of a Via

Argentina office whose apparent business is reproducing cassettes for export. The office is equipped with a telex and a shortwave radio for sea communications, Blandon said.

Noriega, the CIA and the Pentagon [subhead]

In November, Noriega was invited to Washington to attend friendly meetings with senior Pentagon officials. Noriega and two top colonels stayed at the Watergate Hotel. Pretel and Rodriguez also accompanied Noriega, a former ranking U.S. official disclosed.

The Pentagon recommended that U.S. military aid for Noriega be considerably increased, in order to reinforce Panama's military capacity to defend the canal, and Washington gave the matter special treatment, the former official recalled. The CIA invited Noriega to a secret meeting, which aggravated several Pentagon officials, the informer said. Noriega managed to get the United States to increase its mililtary aid to $8 million.

On his return trip to Panama, Noriega made a stopover with his colonels in Las Vegas, for a long weekend of fun and gambling.

Money Causes Division Within the FDP [subhead]

Noriega's income from drugs increased when prominent members of the Medellin cartel sought refuge in Panama during the official repression in their country following the murder of [Colombian] Justice Minister Rodrigo Lara Bonilla in 1984. According to Blandon and other former Panamanian officials, Noriega used FDP agents as bodyguards for the cartel members.

The large influx of money from drugs caused divisions within the mililtary forces. On one occasion, top officials who were counting money received from the Colombians argued about a missing briefcase that supposedly contained $1 million, according to a written statement by Colonel Diaz Herrera, retired, obtained by the HERALD.

The magnitude of the presence of top Colombian drug smugglers in Panama came to surface in June 1984, as a result of a raid conducted at a [cocaine] lab in Darien. Colonel Julian Melo, secretary general of Noriega's staff was arrested along with 23 Colombians.

Blandon said this capture had enraged the Colombian drug trafficking czars, who had paid Melo $5 million to bribe the military commanders so they would allow the cocaine plant operation. At this point, it is not known whether or not Noriega directly received money. Nevertheless, the laboratory—supplied by two French helicopters—could not have been established without the commander's approval, Blandon said.

According to Blandon, Castro became involved in the dispute at the Colombians' request. Blandon maintained that by that time, the Colombians had become Castro's friends since the Cuban president had allowed them to use Cuba as a stopover point in their drug trafficking operations, provided they transported weapons for the M-19 Colombian guerrilla movement.

Blandon added that Noriega was in Paris when the Darien raid was carried out. Noriega immediately sent an envoy to Havana and he took a flight to New York, and then another flight to Havana. The envoy arrived in Havana and met with Castro, who put him in contact with a Colombian representative of the Medellin cartel, Blandon said.

Noriega's envoy met with the Colombian representative in Havana. That envoy mentioned the $5 million paid to the Panamanian authorities for protection, adding they were enraged because of the attack on the laboratory. On the same afternoon, Noriega arrived in Havana and was welcomed by Cuban Defense Minister Raul Castro, who is Fidel's brother. Noriega was briefed by his envoy on the meeting he held with the Colombians. Later on the same day, Noriega held a 4-hour private meeting with Castro.

Once the meeting was over, Noriega said he had "reached an agreement" with Castro so "the Medellin cartel would not take any reprisals against Panama," Blandon stated. Castro sent some 25 armed agents to accompany Noriega during his return trip to Panama, in order to "protect Noriega in case there was any problem at the airport," in Panama, Blandon declared. He noted that Noriega was worried about possible problems, because there were rumors of a coup d'etat against him. Blandon said he did not know the details of the agreements.

Shortly after Noriega returned to Panama, Col Melo was released and the 23 Colombians were sent back to Colombia, Blandon said. Panama returned some of the captured equipment and the drug trafficking leaders, as well as $3 million in cash. No one was prosecuted Blandon said.

Noriega's spokesman, Commander Lopez denied on Friday that Noriega had traveled to Havana in 1984. Angel Pino, who spoke on behalf of the Cuban Interest Section in Washington, after Blandon's declarations had been released said: "This story is so crazy it deserves no comments."

Upon consolidating his command in the Army, Noriega broke with [Cesar] Rodriguez, Carlton, and other alleged drug traffickers. Rodriguez was murdered in Medellin in 1986. Carlton was extradited from Costa Rica in January 1987 to face charges related to drug trafficking, and he allegedly testified before a Miami grand jury, saying he had served as mediator in the payment of bribes paid by the Medellin cartel to Noriega. Blandon stated that the

breaking of relations between Noriega and the alleged drug traffickers was for the purpose of cleaning up Noriega's image after 1984. Blandon added that Noriega suspended the weapons shipments to left-wing rebel groups for 4 years.

Nevertheless, Blandon said, in August Noriega agreed to send new clandestine weapons shipments to the Salvadoran guerrillas. This time, instead of money Noriega expected to receive more political support from the left-wing Latin Americans who support the Salvadoran rebels, Blandon maintained.

Since the weapons were going to be sent through Nicaragua, Noriega invited the EPS Intelligence Chief Ricardo Wheelock to Panama. Wheelock, Blandon said, told Noriega the Sandinists would cooperate in this matter. Blandon said he was not sure whether or not the weapons had reached theeir final destination.

Exiled Business Leaders Return to Country

PA291713 Panama City Telemetro Television in Spanish 2300 GMT 28 Jan 88

[Text] After being out of the country for 5 months as a result of the country's political situation, five private business leaders arrived this afternoon on COPA [Panamanian Airline Company] from Costa Rica.

Many people gathered at the Omar Torrijos International Airport to greet these leaders. They were: Aurelio Barria, president of the Panamanian Chamber of Commerce; Eduardo Vallarino, former president of the National Council of Private Enterprise; Gilbert Mallol, former president of the Chamber of Commerce; Roberto Brenes of the Panamanian Association of Business Executives; Rafael Zuniga, Chamber of Commerce administrative director; and Bosco Ricardo Vallarino, news anchorman and our colleague.

Upon his arrival in the country, Aurelio Barria issued a statement:

[Begin Barria recording] I am proud to be back in Panama. We have returned to join the cause. We are happy and proud of what you have done and we shall keep to the Civic Crusade's principles. We shall stand firm while seeking solutions for Panama. [end recording].

Barria and the other private business leaders left the airport accompanied by relatives, friends, and fellow Chamber of Commerce members. They were approached once more by the press:

[Begin Barria recording] We are proud and happy to be back in Panama following our bitter banishment. However, we are here to find solutions, because Panama needs quick solutions before it is too late.

Our colleague, Bosco Ricardo Vallarino, said:

[Begin recording] First, it is a great pleasure for me to be back in my country, together with my colleagues from Channel 13 and with my Panamanian people. Now that I have returned, I hope the Government and Justice Ministry will return my radio announcer and commentator's license. I want the Panamanian people's support, and I hope the ministry provides it, too. [end recording].

Later, a car caravan traveled along the airport road and Via Espana until it arrived at Porras Park, where a scheduled meeting took place.

Nicaraguan Minister Cardenal Meets Delvalle

PA260351 Panama City Televisora Nacional in Spanish 1730 GMT 22 Jan 88

[Text] His Excellency Father Fernando Cardenal, Nicaraguan education minister, has been received in a special audience by Panamanian President Eric Arturo Delvalle at the Palace of the Herons.

Cardenal, who was accompanied by his Excellency Alejandro Arguello Guzman, Nicaraguan ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary; and Mauricio Ardocia, chief legal adviser to the Nicaraguan foreign minister; brought a message that Nicaraguan President Commander Daniel Ortega Saavedra has sent to all the presidents of the Contadora and Support Group countries.

Panama is the first of the countries Cardenal has visited on this mission. He will later go to the other Contadora and Support Group countries.

During the meeting between the Panamanian president and the Nicaraguan education minister, it was said that Nicaragua is taking steps to carry out the provisions of the Esquipulas II plan, and that it is the country that has made the greatest progress in this regard.

Other important subjects related to the Central American situation and the San Jose meeting were discussed during the meeting.

Argentina

Rico Case Responses, Investigations Continue

Alfonsin on Assassination Plot

PY291541 Buenos Aires NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS in Spanish 1353 GMT 29 Jan 88

[Excerpt] Buenos Aires, 29 Jan (NA)—President Raul Alfonsin has revealed that during the recent military rebellion plans were made to assassinate him and Brigadier Major Ernesto Crespo, the Air Force chief of staff. In a subsequent news conference, however, President Alfonsin declined to clearly comment on the issue, and advised the journalists accredited to Casa Rosada "to be discreet so as to avoid sensationalism."

Alfonsin called the rebel groups who attempted to destabilize the democratic system "a group of delirious people," and admitted that "civilian funds" were used to finance the rebellion, although these funds did not constitute a substantial amount.

During the news conference at Government House, President Alfonsin said that it is impossible to affirm whether or not "there will be similar incidents in the future. If there are other incidents, however, they will be increasingly less important."

In Alfonsin's opinion, the three branches of the Armed Forces are united and "ready to defend the institutions."

Alfonsin said that since the beginning of the transition to democracy, it has been said that a new coup d'etat would be impossible. "We knew, however, that we would have to face difficulties, because we were inheriting a very distorted situation."

The president said there is no need to confirm Defense Minister Horacio Juanarena in his position, and added: "On the contrary, I am thankful" for Juanarena's work.

Alfonsin said military crises always "spread across the borders." He also said the strengthening of Argentine democratic institutions "ends with facilitating new investments."

Asked about the interview that he gave to the Spanish news agency EFE, which was published today, President Alfonsin asked journalists "to be discreet so as to avoid sensationalism." When asked if it was true that the rebels had planned to murder him, Alfonsin smiled broadly and declined to confirm or deny this bit of news.

In its fifth edition yesterday, the morning daily LA RAZON published this news on its front page under the headline: "Alfonsin reveals the rebels wanted to assassinate him."

The newspaper says that, according to Alfonsin, "there were delirious plans to kill (Ernesto) Crespo—the Air Force chief of staff—and me to allegedly save the nation."

Discussing this issue at the news conference, the president instructed his spokesman, Jose Ignacio Lopez, to distribute among the journalists accredited to Government House the "genuine and complete version" of his interview with the news agency EFE in order to avoid misunderstandings.

Asked about the national economic situation, Alfonsin said: "We are on the right track." He reiterated that the goverment is firmly determined "to pursue the current economic program."

Asked about comments made by Economic Planning and Coordinating Secretary Adolfo Canitrot, who said the Austral Program "was unrealistic," Alfonsin corrected the journalist and said the economic planning and coordination secretary referred to the "false hopes built up by this program."

"All of us in the government harbored hopes that the inflation problem would be finally solved," Alfonsin said. He added, however, that in light of the difficulties appearing in the field of economic performance, "the Austral Program has served to dispel the specter of hyperinflation."

Concerning the Justicialist communique issued after the military crisis, Alfonsin said "it is nonsense" to involve the UCR in a coup attempt.

Concerning his reaction to the communique, Alfonsin confessed he was "surprised and distressed" because "the political concern must not exceed the framework of [word indistinct]," and "must respect other opinions."

Concerning constitutional changes, Alfonsin said, with a broad smile, that he has his "own experience" concerning the possibility of a 4-year term and reaffirmed his predilection for a system of government that includes a prime minister in Argentina. [passage omitted]

Air Force Chief Comments

PY302322 Buenos Aires TELAM in Spanish 1600 GMT 30 Jan 88

[Text] Buenos Aires, 30 Jan (TELAM)—Air Force Chief of Staff General Ernesto Crespo today said the Air Force has always been willing to respect the will of the people and to live within the law.

Gen Crespo made this statement to the press after the ceremony commemorating the 80th anniversary of the Argentine Air Club, located at km 25,700 [figure as received] of National Road 3, in the Gregorio Laferrere district.

Asked about the attempt by Colonel Luis Estrella, retired, to take over the 7th Air Brigade in Moron, Crespo said that event had nothing to do with the uprising headed by Rico. He added that a situation of instability in the country was taken advantage of in an attempt to force a situation that could be labeled a coup.

Gen Crespo stated that his force wants the Air Force officers involved in the attempt to take over the Aeroparque Metropolitan Airport and the base in Moron to be tried by a military court.

Asked about the statement by President Alfonsin to the effect he and Gen Crespo could have been assassinated, Crespo said the president had already said it. He added: I cannot subtract from or add to what he has already said. Gen Crespo indicated the information and documents available to the Air Force confirm the president's statement.

SIDE Chief on Investigation

PY292112 Buenos Aires TELAM in Spanish 1350 GMT 29 Jan 88

[Text] Buenos Aires, 29 Jan (TELAM)—SIDE chief Facundo Suarez today said the statement by President Raul Alfonsin about the participation of civilians who provided money for the military uprising headed by former Lieutenant Colonel Aldo Rico is based on an ongoing investigation.

Suarez said the SIDE investigation has turned up important evidence about the activities of these people. However, he said: The investigation is being conducted by the judges, and we cannot give any information. We provide intelligence information but only in accordance with the law.

Asked by Radio Mitre about his participation in the talks with military men during the Monte Caseros event, Suarez explained that because of the job he holds, he has to participate actively in events that could create problems involving security and constitutional stability.

He said Lieutenant Colonel Angel Leon's statement in Tucuman, which was reproduced by the press, was an admission by Leon himself that there was no pact or agreement, and that only talks were held.

Suarez added: I did meet with with General Crespo and Msgr Medina on several occasions. He explained that when the orders had to be transmitted, this was done by the defense minister, and it was the defense minister who talked with the rebels. He said: I never talked with Rico.

Army Issues Communique

PY300227 Buenos Aires NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS in Spanish 2020 GMT 29 Jan 88

[Quotation marks as received]

[Text] Buenos Aires, 29 Jan (NA)—The Army has released a communique on the legal situation of those implicated in the 17 January revolt.

The text is as follows:

Regarding the ongoing inquiries and investigations of violations of military discipline, the Army General Staff reports that:

"The military judges have placed the following officers in rigorous preventive detention:

Lieutenant Colonel Angel Daniel Leon, charged with mutiny;

Lieutenant Colonel Enrique Carlos Venturino, charged with insubordination;

Lieutenant Colonel Hector Alvarez Igarzabal, charged with mutiny; and

Major Jorge Alberto Damico, charged with mutiny.

"Fifty-five more chiefs and officers have been placed in either rigorous preventive detention or reduced preventive detention, according to the charges on which they will be tried: "Mutiny, insubordination, or disobedience."

"Forty-three noncommissioned officers have been released and put at the disposal of the courts. Six noncommissioned officers are being held in preventive detention.

"The military courts will continue investigating the different cases, and the legal situation of all personnel involved will be clarified soon.

The Army Chief of General Staff will decide whether the Permanent War Council will hear the cases of the chiefs and officers of the Armed Forces. Once the inquiries are concluded, this court is competent to pass sentences.

Alfonsin, Malmierca Discuss Human Rights Issue

PY292131 Buenos Aires DYN in Spanish 1620 GMT 29 Jan 88

[Text] Buenos Aires, 29 Jan (DYN)—Diplomatic sources have announced that Cuban Foreign Minister Isidoro Malmierca today informed President Raul Alfonsin about his country's fears that the United States will again request sanctions against Cuba for alleged human rights violations. Malmierca asked the Argentine Government to continue to vote against such initiatives.

Foreign Minister Dante Caputo attended the 30-minute meeting with Alfonsin at the Olivos residence this morning.

There was no official report on the meeting earlier this morning because Malmierca eluded journalists who were waiting at the main entrance and left through a secondary exit.

Malmierca is touring several Latin American countries to seek support for his government in view of the possibility of a U.S. request for sanctions against Cuba by the UN Human Rights Commission. Yesterday Malmierca talked with Caputo about the Latin American situation, the foreign debt burden, the scarce possibility of increasing exports, and the current state of bilateral relations.

The report released by the Foreign Ministry yesterday did not mention the topic of sanctions. It was denied at the time that the issue of the Argentine position at the UN meeting in Geneva on 1 February was even discussed.

Cuban's concern stems from the possibility that the United States might insist on on-site investigations of alleged human rights violations in Cuba. The U.S. initiative did not pass last year because the delegations of the Group of Eight (Contadora and Contadora Support Groups) voted against it.

That vote, which included Argentina, drew a formal protest from the U.S. Department of State, and the widespread criticism of political sectors close to Argentine liberalism.

Malmierca's efforts throughout the tour of different Latin American countries are directed at consolidating bilateral relations and strengthening the slow process that will bring Havana back into the OAS, as was suggested by the presidents of the Group of Eight during the Acapulco summit.

Argentina was one of the countries that joined the initiative. Within that context, Malmierca and Caputo today discussed the process, and possible mechanisms, for Cuba's reentry into the OAS.

Havana's position is that the topic should be "carefully" analyzed. The result should be based on "collective" discussion by all members of the regional organization.

Alfonsin Leaves 29 Jan for Visit to Spain

PY292153 Buenos Aires TELAM in Spanish 2129 GMT 29 Jan 88

[Text] Buenos Aires, 29 Jan (TELAM)—At 1815 today President Raul Alfonsin left for Madrid, where he will sign a cooperation agreement between Argentina and Spain with Felipe Gonzalez, the head of the Spanish Government.

The presidential plane departed from Ezeiza Airport.

Loan To Help Peruvian Nuclear Plant Considered

PY282015 Buenos Aires TELAM in Spanish 1618 GMT 28 Jan 88

[Text] Buenos Aires, 28 Jan (TELAM) —The Argentine ambassador to Peru today asked President Alfonsin to make a $5-million loan available to Peru to assist in finishing construction of the Guaranga Nuclear Plant, located 40 km north of Lima.

After a meeting with Alfonsin at Government House, [Ambassador] Anselmo Marini said Argentina has already invested more than $100 million in the construction of the plant.

Marini said the plant will be used for civilian purposes and is already 98 percent completed. The additional $5 million will allow the Peruvian Government to finish the plant and will maintain Argentine prestige in nuclear matters.

Marini said the funds were to have been provided by Peru, but the current economic situation has forced the Peruvian Government to seek a soft loan from Argentina to finish construction.

Marini added he informed the president of the difficulties encountered with regard to the loan because the Argentine Central Bank has not issued any resolution on the matter.

Regarding the ability of the country to offer such a credit, Marini stressed: We know about the burden of debts on the Argentine economy, but the country has to preserve its prestige in the nuclear energy field.

Brazil

Government Justifies Weapons Sale to Libya

PY300043 Madrid EFE in Spanish 2304 GMT 29 Jan 88

[Excerpt] Brasilia, 28 Jan (EFE)—The Brazilian Government today justified the sale of weapons to Libya on the grounds that the country is facing a foreign debt problem and a serious economic crisis. The justification comes in the wake of criticism and warnings from the U.S. Administration.

"We cannot afford to lose a $2-billion deal when Brazil is having such a difficult time, a Brazilian diplomatic source told EFE today. The source said it had no knowledge whether these weapons would be resold to Iran.

For his part, Brazilian Foreign Minister Roberto de Abreu Sodre has said he "is not seeking to promote controversy with the United States." The U.S. Government yesterday termed "deplorable" the minister's explanations on the sale of weapons to Libya.

"I have already said what I have to say and I will add nothing else," Abreu Sodre maintained. Last Wednesday he officially admitted that Brazil was selling "not offensive but defensive" weapons to the government of Colonel Mu'ammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhdhafi. [passage omitted]

Army Denies Role in Deal

PY300153 Sao Paulo O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO in Portuguese 29 Jan 88 p 2

[Text] Through its Social Communications Center, the Army yesterday announced that it has nothing to do with the possible export of Brazilian-made weapons to Libya and that the Libyans came to Brazil at the invitation of ENGESA [Specialized Engineers, Inc], the manufacturer of combat vehicles. Army officers revealed that the Army only provides guarantees on the quality of weapons that have been tested by its technicians in cases of arms export operations. According to them, the War Materiel Department (DMB) in some instances can deny authorization for an arms export deal if the country is in need of a particular weapon.

The Army Social Communications Center explained that the arms export policy is managed by Itamaraty and the National Security Council, which together evaluate the advisability of exporting military materiel to a particular country, always trying to avoid misunderstandings with friendly countries. For that reason, according to the Social Communications Center, Brazil does not buy war materiel from Israel nor does it sell it to Israel, because the Arab countries, especially Iraq and Saudi Arabia, are important trade partners.

Likewise, the officers blamed the press for trying to involve the Army in the export of Brazilian-made weapons to Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi. They pointed out that contrary to what has been reported, Army Minister Leonidas Pires has at no time met with the Libyan delegation now visiting the country.

Yesterday, officers at the Army General Headquarters said there is only a remote possiblity Brazil will sell arms to Libya, because such an operation would hurt negotiations now under way for the sale of Osorio tanks to Saudi Arabia by ENGESA, which has already won an international bid for such a sale.

Asked about this matter yesterday afternoon, Foreign Minister Abreu Sodre said that he would not comment on it, because he does not want "to engage in polemics."

Sarney Justifies 'Tough' Fiscal Measures

PY300130 Brasilia Domestic Service in Portuguese 2100 GMT 29 Jan 88

[Excerpts] During the program "Chatting by the Radio" today, President Jose Sarney said he is not concerned by the insidious and brutal campaign being waged against his government and the Presidency. Sarney said he is only concerned about working and confronting problems like inflation, the foreign debt, and public administration.

[Begin Sarney recording] [Passage omitted] I convened a cabinet meeting for 1 February to make an evaluation of the budget. I will talk with all ministers to draft the appropriate guidelines for its implementation. In this way each minister will be able to assume the serious responsibility of faithfully fulfilling the objectives of the budget. We will cut expenses to the minimum. We will not allow any disbursement out of the unified budget, a budget that was conceived by my government and that will be implemented for the first time in the country. We will issue drastic orders to attain these goals.

Yesterday I signed a very tough decree. I realize that. Very few times in the history of the public administration of this country has there been such a tough decree, with such severe measures and scope. We abolished 40,000 positions that fell vacant because of retirement, death, or other reasons. We prohibited all new hiring and suspended all public competition to fill these positions.

We are taking measures so as not to be surprised by an explosion of personnel expenditures due to the careless spending of those responsible for autonomous organizations, foundations, and state enterprises. We are convinced that we have started a new stage with a good team. We will have to take severe measures suitable for a wartime economy in public administration and in the country's economy as a whole.

However, I want to warn you that our government's work is not enough. The private sector has to contribute and avoid raising prices for the mere [words indistinct] engaging in speculation.

I want to conclude by saying to all Brazilians that I am optimistic. We have an uphill struggle but we shall overcome it. Brazil will advance despite the pessimists, the frustrated, and the demagogues. [end recording]

Sarney Names New Government Leader in Senate

PY291306 Brasilia Radio Nacional da Amazonia Network in Portuguese 0900 GMT 29 Jan 88

[Text] President Jose Sarney has asked Senator Saldanha Derzi from the PMDB of Mato Grosso do Sul to be government leader in the Senate. According to (Carlos Aru), assistant press secretary of the Presidency, the senator has accepted the president's request.

Chile

CNT Head, CAUCE Director Arrested

PY291425 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1252 GMT 29 Jan 88

[Text] Santiago, 29 Jan (EFE)—National Workers Command (CNT) President Manuel Bustos; Francisco Herreros, director of the magazine CAUCE; and Jose Sanfuentes, a leader of the Communist Party and the Marxist coalition "United Left [IU]," were detained in Santiago early this morning.

According to reports supplied by his relatives, Bustos, the top leader of the largest Chilean trade union organization, was detained early this morning, shortly before 0600, at his house while he was sleeping with his wife, journalist Miriam Verdugo.

According to initial reports, Herreros, the director of the opposition magazine CAUCE, and Sanfuentes, the IU secretary, were also detained at their homes.

The three men were detained by Carabineros personnel who were enforcing an arrest warrant issued by military prosecutor Luis Acevedo Gonzalez.

Bustos is currently involved in a trial and is charged with violating the military penal code for people who "call for or incite disorders against members of the forces of order."

Bustos was recently punished by a Santiago appellate court judge who accused him of being a member of "groups with different political leanings, all of which have a common denominator: the subversive-drug trafficking-terrorist spectrum, which called for a stoppage and a variety of other activities."

In light of the legal accusations, Bustos announced that his organization would study the possibility of filing a lawsuit against Judge Arnoldo Dreyse, who handed down the ruling.

Journalist Herreros was detained by Carabineros using two vehicles, including a bus.

Another group of Carabineros went to the house of Sanfuentes, who was detained in the presence of his wife, Maria Ines Vargas.

According to press reports, Jose Campusano, leader of an organization of neighbors, is also being sought by the police.

Opposition Leaders Testify

PY291834 Santiago Radio Chilena Network in Spanish 1600 GMT 29 Jan 88

[Report from the Military Prosecutor's Office by Angel Bozan Ramos]

[Excerpt] The [three] leaders who were detained this morning are still inside the Military Prosecutor's Office.

CNT President Manuel Bustos is waiting to testify before military prosecutor Luis Acevedo Gonzalez; IU leader Jose Sanfuentes has already testified; and Francisco Herreros, the director of the magazine CAUCE, is now testifying before the military prosecutor. [passage omitted]

Journalist, Others Released

PY292348 Santiago Domestic Service in Spanish 2200 GMT 29 Jan 88

[Text] Manuel Bustos, president of the self-styled CNT, was released today after begin questioned at the 3d military court. Bustos was arrested this morning following an order issued by Carabineros Captain Luis Acevedo, who heads the third court.

CAUCE magazine director Francisco Herreros and Communist leader Jose Sanfuentes, of the IU, were also released this afternoon after being questioned at the same court.

Union Leader Cited on Arrest

PY302015 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1537 GMT 30 Jan 88

[Text] Santiago, 30 Jan (EFE)—Manuel Bustos, president of the CNT, who was detained for a few hours yesterday, said his arrest was "absolutely unfair."

Bustos, together with CAUCE magazine director Francisco Herreros and PCCh leader Jose Sanfuentes, was arrested by Carabineros yesterday morning and taken to a military prosecutor, who released them after an interrogation session.

A few hours after his release, Bustos said he did not intend to hide or escape from the country because he does things in the open, "for people to see."

Military prosecutor Luis Olivares [name as received] ordered the arrest of Bustos, Herreros, and Sanfuentes in contravention of normal legal procedures for obtaining testimonies. Olivares is investigating a case of sedition by Bustos.

Manuel Bustos said he felt "disturbed and concerned" that the military prosecutor and Judge Arnoldo Dreyse can "insult me and still calmly judge people without acknowledging that they are insulting persons who are only defending the people."

Bustos had already been judged and sentenced to 541 days in prison by Judge Dreyse, on charges brought by the Pinochet regime.

A group of union leaders today announced they will press charges against Judge Dreyse for sentencing Bustos on charges of calling a general strike.

The union leaders' charges are based on Judge Dreyse's irregular procedures and "arbitrary judgment." Dreyse had decided that although Bustos and his followers "held different political views, they had a common denominator, namely, a leaning toward subversion, drug trafficking, and terrorism."

Bustos concluded by saying that "we are living through hard times because there are people who already feel defeated, and who are trying to frighten the opposition to prevent changes in Chile."

Ecuador

Vote Counts in Presidential Elections Reported

Bucaram Said Attacked

PA312040 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1743 GMT 31 Jan 88

[Excerpt] Guayaquil, 31 Jan (EFE)—Ecuadoran Roldosist Party presidential candidate Abdala Bucaram was attacked in Guayaquil this morning on his way to vote.

Bucaram himself explained to a Guayaquil radio station that an unidentified man fired at him.

According to Bucaram, he and his bodyguards pursued the attacker but were unable to capture him.

Bucaram added that the attacker tried to seek shelter at one of the Red Cross offices in downtown Guayaquil; however, he was unable to enter even though he struck the guard at the entrance. [passage omitted]

Projections Show Borja Winning

PA010215 Madrid EFE in Spanish 0052 GMT 1 Feb 88

[Text] Quito, 31 Jan (EFE)—According to "Telecentro" radio station's independent projection of election results, the Social Democrat Rodrigo Borja is heading the list of candidates after 11 percent of the votes—more than 500,000 votes—have been counted.

According to this analysis, Borja presently has 97,014 votes and will have a projected 756,717 votes at the final count. He is followed by right-wing Sixto Duran Ballen, who should end up with 574,432 votes.

The third candidate in the projection's list is the populist Abadala Bucaram, and fourth is General Frank Vargas Pazzos. Both candidates should end up with approximately 500,000 votes each out of a total 4,670,000 votes.

Presently, 11 percent of the votes have been counted; annulled votes (annulled and blank) amount to 12 percent, and abstentions number approximately 25 percent.

On this subject, and in his first official public statements, recently designated Minister of Government and Justice Heinz Moeller expressed his concern at the high level of abstentions despite the fact that voting is mandatory.

Moeller assessed the elections as having been peaceful and clean. He noted that the only incident registered was in a lower-income neighborhood in Quito. Two persons died in the incident, which was caused by a land dispute not linked to the election process.

Regarding incidents, the minister did not refer to the charge made by populist candidate Abdala Bucaram on a Guayaquil radio station that he had been attacked while casting his ballot today.

'Unofficial' Count Reported

PA010259 Madrid EFE in Spanish 0200 GMT 1 Feb 88

[Text] Quito, 31 Jan (EFE)—Social Democrat Rodrigo Borja and nationalist General Frank Vargas Pazzos are the leading candidates for a run-off election for the Ecuadoran Presidency, as reported by the unofficial computation of the National Secretariat of Public Information (SENDIP).

In its second bulletin, SENDIP reports 305,397 votes counted throughout the country, representing 7 percent of the 4.67 million eligible voters.

It gives Borja 65,394 votes, followed by Vargas with 44,816, who in turn is closely followed by Social Christian Sixto Duran Ballen and populist Abdala Bucaram.

The independent vote counting center "Telecentro" has counted 25 percent of the votes, or precisely 1,142,537 votes, and it gives the lead to Rodrigo Borja and second place to Sixto Duran.

Borja, Bucaram Attain Lead

PA010715 Madrid EFE in Spanish 0655 GMT Feb 88

[Excerpts] Quito, 1 Feb (EFE)—Right-wing candidate Sixto Duran Ballen has admitted his defeat in the 31 January general elections, in which he finished in third place. Therefore, he will not participate in the second round of presidential elections, which are scheduled for 8 May. [passage omitted]

Social Democratic candidate Rodrigo Borja finished in first place, thus confirming the polls, with 650,029 votes. Unofficial reports indicate that 75 of the votes have been counted.

Following Borja is the surprise candidate for these elections, populist Abdala Bucaram, who has received 489,413 votes. This represents 15.3 percent of the votes counted so far.

Duran has dropped to third place, with no possibility of participating in the second round, with 404,511 votes, or 12.7 percent of the total.

General Frank Vargas, who has rebelled three times, is in fourth place, with 347,385 votes, representing 11 percent. [passage omitted]

Government Minister Robles Plaza Resigns
PA300045 Quito Radio Quito in Spanish 2300 GMT 29 Jan 88

[Excerpt] President Leon Febres Cordero today decorated Luis Robles Plaza, former minister of government and justice, with the order of the Great Cross. Robles Plaza has been replaced by Dr Heinz Moeller. The president highlighted the quality performance of the former government minister, saying that during his term in office he worked hard to ensure the country's security in an unending struggle against guerrillas and drug traffickers.

[Begin Febres Cordero recording] Mr Luis Eduardo Robles Plaza has served in several posts in the vanguard of the continuous struggle to ensure the success of the most cherished national causes. He is one of the most valuable and important personages in modern Ecuadoran history. This is known to all citizens and will be confirmed by history. I salute him, first because of his noble personal qualities, patriotism, unswerving loyalty, and fervent and characteristic commitment to friendship and humanitarianism. [end recording]

Heinz Moeller, a lawyer, was appointed minister of government after Luis Robles resigned yesterday during a national television network. Moeller, who was sworn in by President Febres Cordero, is not presently affiliated with any political party, but was a deputy in 1979 and 1980 for the Constitutional Democratic Coalition, which no longer exists. [passage omitted]